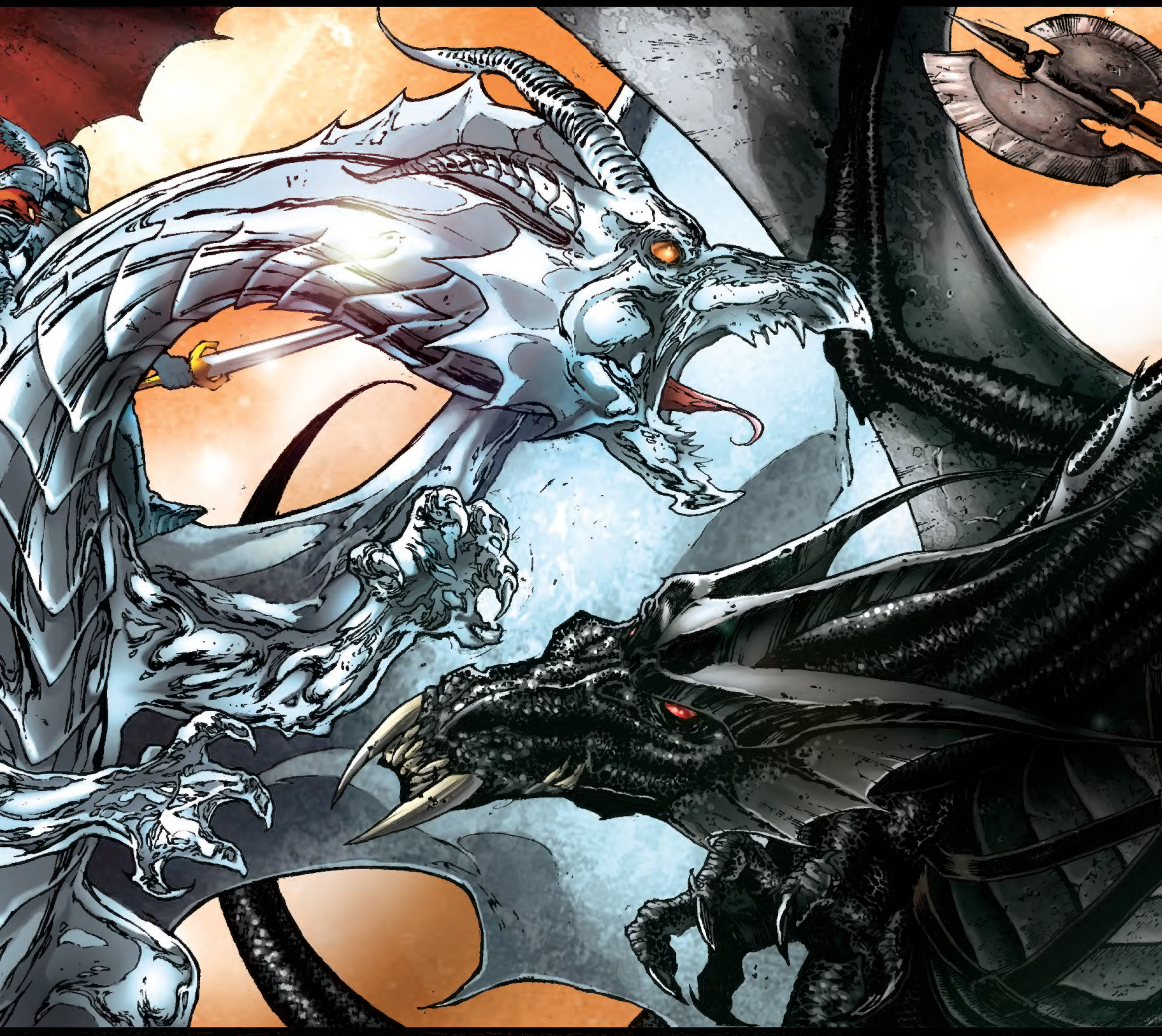
DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

DragonLance®

The Legend of Huma



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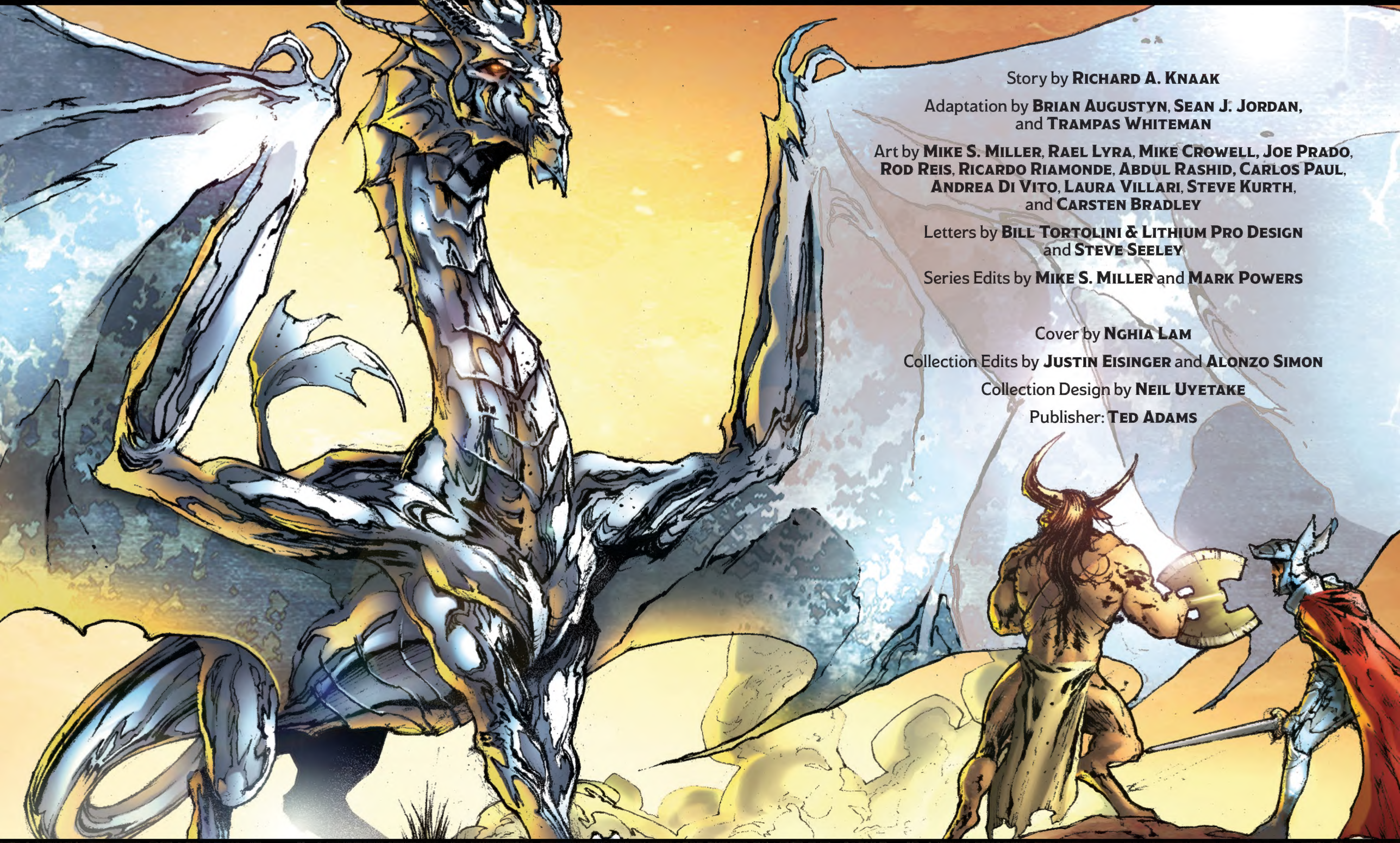

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Publisher: **Ted Adams**

eISBN: 9781684061426

DIGITAL

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www.IDWPUBLISHING.com

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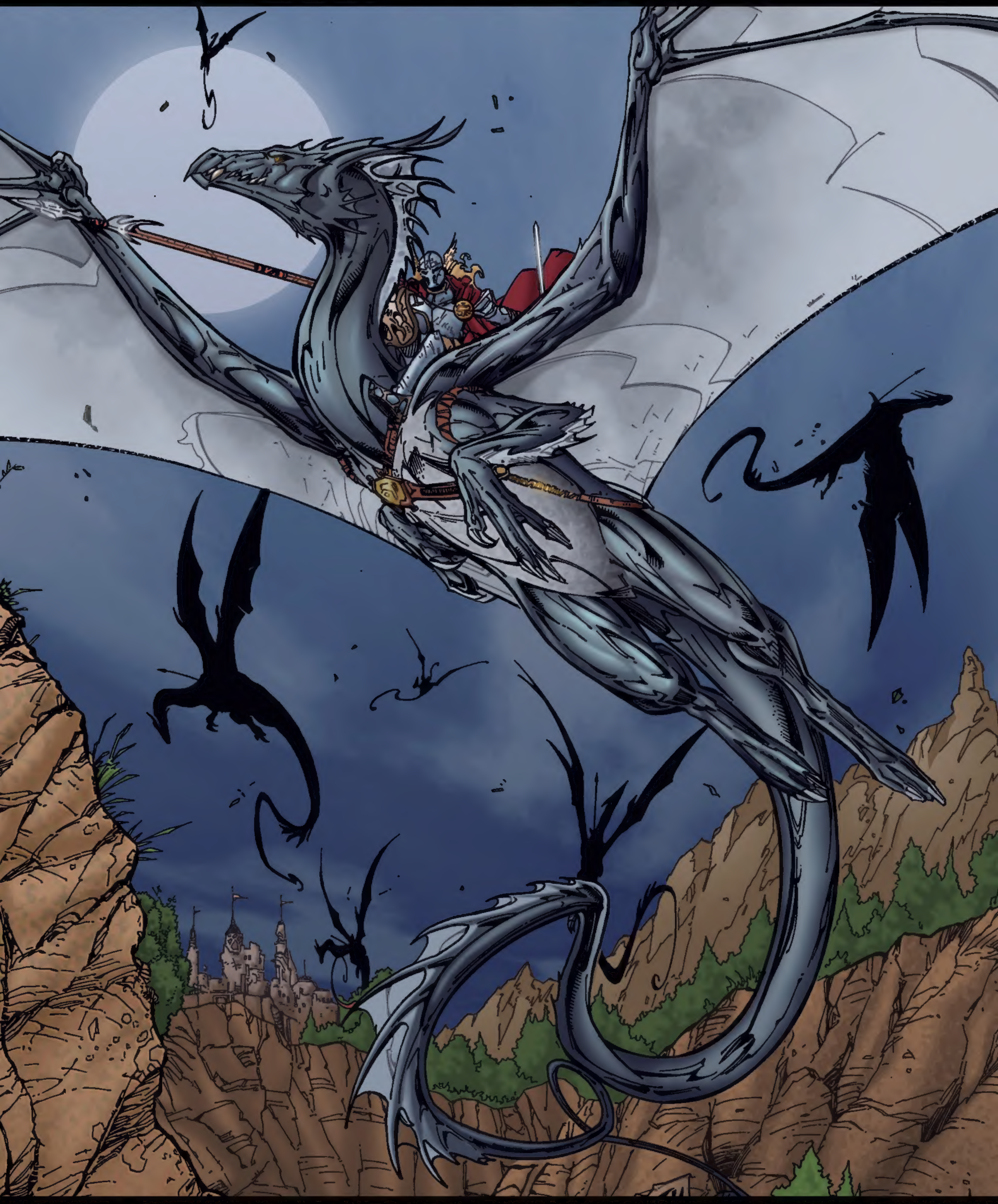
Originally published by Devil's Due Publishing as DRAGONLANCE: THE LEGEND OF HUMA issues #1-6.



SERIDAN.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN THIS WAS A PROSPEROUS COMMUNITY, BUT THAT WAS A PLAGUE, SEVERAL FAMINES AND A BOUT OF INFECTIOUS MADNESS AGO...

FOR SOME REASON, THOUGH, THE VILLAGE HAS NEVER BEEN TOTALLY DESTROYED. IT JUST CONTINUES TO WASTE AWAY — MUCH LIKE THE PEOPLE WHO TRY TO LIVE HERE.

I UNDERSTAND WHY THEY RESENT US.

THEY BELIEVE OUR LIVES ARE BETTER THAN THEIRS, THAT WE'VE SOMEHOW MANAGED TO ESCAPE THE WAR, THE DESTRUCTION, THE RAIDS AND THE HOPELESSNESS...

THEY THINK WE DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT IT MEANS TO SUFFER.

WE ARE *KNIGHTS OF SOLAMNIA*, UNDER THE COMMAND OF LORD OSWAL, HIGH-WARRIOR AND MASTER OF THE NOBLE ORDER OF THE ROSE.

WE STAND AGAINST THE MINIONS OF THE GODDESS TAKHISIS, THE DARK QUEEN; THE VILE GOBLINS, THE MARAUDING EVIL DRAGONS, AND THE BRUTAL OGRES WHO HAVE RAVAGED TOWNS LIKE THIS ONE.

AND YET, AS WE MAKE OUR WAY TOWARDS KYRE, WE HAVE LITTLE TIME TO STOP AND CONSOLE THOSE WE ENCOUNTER ALONG THE WAY.

I HAVE NOTHING BUT COMPASSION FOR THESE PEOPLE.

HOW CAN THEY LIVE THIS WAY?

IS THERE ANYTHING TO EAT IN THIS DEVASTATED COUNTRY?

PART OF ME WANTS TO THROW THEM WHAT'S LEFT OF MY RATIONS.

IT WOULD LIKELY BE THE BEST MEAL THEY'VE HAD IN WEEKS.

THE KNIGHTHOOD HAS RULES AGAINST THAT, OF COURSE.

I COULD GIVE AWAY MY RATIONS IN A BURST OF COMPASSION, BUT WHAT THEN?

THEY'D EAT WELL TODAY AND WE'D ALL GO HUNGRY TOMORROW.

A TRUE KNIGHT, OF COURSE, WOULD NEVER EVEN *THINK* TO BREAK THE RULES.

KEEP *UP*, YOU!

ANOTHER SIGN OF MY INADEQUACIES, I SUPPOSE...

GAYNOR, HUMA, TRILANE, BANN, ROLLAND, DARIUS, CORWIN, LARIK!

BREAK RANKS FOR PATROL DUTY!

LORD OSWAL WANTS THE DEAD WOODS TO THE SOUTH SCOUTED. POSSIBLY *GOBLINS*, MAYBE *OGRES*.

WE MUST RETURN TO THE COLUMN BEFORE SUNSET.

WE DO *NOT* WANT TO BE IN THE WOODS AT NIGHT. NOT THIS CLOSE TO THE WESTERN BORDER. *UNDERSTOOD?*

LET'S RIDE.

THE AREA AROUND SERIDAN LOOKS NO BETTER THAN THE TOWN ITSELF.

WHERE IS PALADINE?

HOW COULD A GOD ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN?

THE FORESTS ARE RAVAGED, THE FIELDS ARE BAKED. NOTHING WILL GROW HERE FOR YEARS TO COME.

IT FEELS SO HOPELESS. OUR WORLD MIGHT AS WELL BE IN THE CLAWS OF THE ENEMY ALREADY...

... NO. IT IS WRONG TO EVEN *THINK* SUCH THINGS.

HOW DO I *DARE* CALL MYSELF A KNIGHT?

TRILANE! SCOUT IT

AYE, SIR!

SPREAD OUT. YOU FOUR TO MY RIGHT.

THE REST TO MY LEFT.

GOBLINS- AND THE UGLY BEASTS ARE EATING!

A MARAUDER PATROL, LIKELY. ABOUT TWENTY OF 'EM, I THINK!

NOTHING WE CAN'T HANDLE.

HUMA, TAKE GAYNOR, BANN AND TRILANE -- RIDE AROUND FROM THE RIGHT.

DID HE JUST PUT ME IN CHARGE?

WHAT WILL THE OTHERS THINK?

WILL THEY EVEN FOLLOW MY LEAD?

... NO.

THESE MEN ARE KNIGHTS OF SOLAMNIA.

WHATEVER THEIR PERSONAL FEELINGS, THEY WILL FOLLOW ORDERS.

WHICH MEANS THEY WILL FOLLOW ME.

THIS SHOULD BE EASY. THEY HAVEN'T EVEN POSTED A GUARD.

AYE, THEY'RE SLOPPY AND THEY'RE STUPID.

BUT THE DARK QUEEN DOESN'T USE THEM AS SOLDIERS.

SHE USES THEM AS MARAUDERS, SPREADING TERROR AND DESTRUCTION.

WHICH MEANS THEY'RE STILL QUITE DANGEROUS.

WE'LL WAIT FOR RENNARD'S SIGNAL.

THAT MUST BE THE LEADER...

... AND THAT LOOKS LIKE A SCOUT.

HE MUST HAVE SEEN SOMETHING...

THEY KNOW.

READY YOURSELVES!

WE GO NOW!

NOW?

PALADINE!!

RAAAAH!

PALADINE!

ROAAHR!!

"A SOLAMNIC KNIGHT IS TAUGHT THAT WARFARE IS DIRTY, DANGEROUS AND DEADLY.

"HE ALSO LEARNS THAT IN THE PURITY OF BATTLE, THERE IS CHALLENGE, EXHILARATION AND A TERRIBLE KIND OF BEAUTY.

"IN THE HEAT OF COMBAT, A TRUE WARRIOR SPIRIT CAN BE FORGED WHERE FEAR AND DOUBT MIGHT ONCE HAVE DOMINATED.

"BUT FOR EVERY LESSON LEARNED, THERE IS A DREADFUL PRICE PAID IN BLOOD AND PAIN."

CRUNCH

THE GOBLINS KNOW THEY'VE LOST.

BUT STILL, THEY FIGHT ON.

SOMETHING DOESN'T SEEM QUITE RIGHT ABOUT THAT...

KRUNCH

WHAT THE?!

WHEEEEEEE!

WHOA... WHOA!!

YAAAAAAHHHH!

GODS!

ALONE. IN HOSTILE TERRITORY.

IF THE OTHERS DON'T THINK I DIED IN THE BATTLE, THEY'LL THINK ME A COWARD THAT RAN AWAY.

MY SHIELD'S GONE, AND MY SUPPLIES ARE PROBABLY UNDER THE HORSE.

IT'S DEFINITELY NOT SAFE TO START MAKING MY WAY BACK NOW...

BUT IF I TRAVEL BY DAYLIGHT, I'LL BE SPOTTED FOR SURE.

=UNGH=

THE PADDING IN MY ARMOR SAVED ME FROM SERIOUS INJURY, BUT MY HEAD NEEDS TIME TO RECOVER.

AHROOOOOOO

WHERE AM I?

THE MISTS ARE THICK DOWN HERE, BUT THEY'LL BE THINNER ABOVE.

AND THE HIGH GROUND SHOULD PROVE MORE ADVANTAGEOUS, STRATEGICALLY.

AT LEAST, I HOPE SO.

UGH. I CAN BARELY SEE WHERE I'M WALKING.

AT LEAST THE PAIN'S SUBSIDING...

POOR GUIVER...!

A GOBLIN?

I THINKS THE WARLORD, HIMSELF WILL REWARD US FER THIS ONE!

MAYBE HE'LL GIVE US THE BULL! I'D LIKE TO SKIN 'EM FER A RUG!

RIGHT. HE KILLED POOR GUIVER, AFTER ALL.

YOU NEVER LIKED GUIVER!

HE OWED ME MONEY! NOW I'LL NEVER GET IT!

HOW DO YA THINK THE OGRES WILL KILL 'IM?

REAL SLOW. THEY GOT SNEAKY MINDS FER THAT KINDA STUFF.

RATTLE

HE'S AWAKE.

LET'S HAVE SOME FUN.

GIVE ME A WEAPON AND LET ME FIGHT!

HMM, I'D THOUGHT THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT A BULL, BUT THAT SOUNDED LIKE A *HUMAN* VOICE...

DID THEY CAPTURE A KNIGHT?

YOU'D LIKE THAT, WOULDN'T YA, COWFACE? WE AIN'T FOOLS, YA KNOW!

YOU'LL DO UNTIL THE REAL THING COMES ALONG- *UNNN!*

WHOA! I THOUGHT HE WAS GONNA DO IT FER A MINUTE!

TWO COPPERS'LL GET YA THAT HE CAN!

WHAT? YOU FOOL! YOU'D BET ON SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

GUIVER WOULD'VE

HE'S PROBABLY TRIPPED OVER A ROCK AGAIN!

WELL, WHAT'S HE GONE AND DONE THEN --CRACKED OPEN HIS HEAD?

I THINK I SHOULD STAY BACK HERE. JUST IN CASE.

PIGSTICKER!

WHERE'D YA GO?

SNEE'S BACK THERE. YA COME WITH US OR I'LL GIVE YA A PIECE OF WHAT THE COW'S GETTIN'.

OKAY, *OKAY!*

IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE MIST, I'D HAVE ALREADY BEEN FOUND.

KA-CHUNK

PIGSTICKER? IS THAT YOU?

PIGSTICKER? *HELLO?*

WHOEVER THIS PRISONER IS, HE'S BIG.

BIG AND RANK.

BE STILL.

THEY'LL BE BACK IN A SECOND—CUT YOUR BONDS AND RUN!

I'LL DO MY BEST TO GIVE YOU TIME!

HE'S DEAD!!

WHAT'S GOING- HEY?!!

YOWW!! HAALPPP!!

SNICK

HEY!

THE BULL'S LOOSE!

RAAAHHR!

KRUUMP

KRAAAAK

YOU HAVE MY GRATITUDE, KNIGHT OF SOLAMNIA. I OWE YOU MY LIFE, A DEBT I CAN NEVER REPAY BUT ONE I SHALL ENDEAVOR TO COMPENSATE YOU FOR IF IT TAKES THE REST OF MY DAYS.

YOU OWE ME NOTHING. ANYONE WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME.

WOULD THEY?

A MINOTAUR!

I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE BEFORE... THEY LIVE FAR OFF, ON THE EASTERN COAST OF ANSALON.

I KNOW THEY'RE OUR ENEMIES -- AND SOME OF THE FIERCEST! --

- BUT STILL!

A MINOTAUR?!

I THINK YOU HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OVER ME.

I'M SURE YOU KNOW HOW TO USE THAT FINE WEAPON.

I DO.

WHAT WERE YOU DOING HERE? WHY WERE YOU A PRISONER OF THESE GOBLINS? I'D ALWAYS HEARD THAT MINOTAURS WERE ALLIED WITH THE OGRES?

SLAVE SOLDIERS WOULD BE A BETTER TERM. WE SERVE THEM BECAUSE THEY HOLD OUR HOMELAND -- AND ALL IN IT-- HOSTAGE.

WHICH DOES NOT EXPLAIN WHY YOU WERE A PRISONER HERE.

ONE DAY, THOUGH, IT WILL BE THE *MINOTAURS* WHO RULE.

I KILLED MY OGRE CAPTAIN.

I STRUCK HIM DOWN WITH MY BARE HANDS.

CRACKED HIS SKULL WITH ONE SHOT.

A GOOD BLOW.

YOU *MURDERED* HIM?

ARE YOU FOND OF OGRES?

THANKS TO ME, NO LIVES WILL BE LOST AGAINST HIS AX - AND HE WAS GOOD, I'LL GIVE HIM THAT.

MANY DIED ON THAT AX, HUMAN, EVEN THE WEAK, THE HELPLESS.

I SAW HIM SLAUGHTER AN OLD MAN AND HIS GRANDCHILDREN. *CHILDREN.*

I DID WHAT *NEEDED* DOING.

THOUGHT IT WAS SO AMONG THE KNIGHTS OF SOLAMNIA, TOO.

I SEE THAT I MAY HAVE MISUNDERSTOOD.

NOW, EITHER KILL ME OR RELEASE ME FROM THESE CHAINS.

I DO NOT CARE TO DISCUSS THIS.

UNBELIEVABLE.

SHOULD I TRUST HIM?

THE MINOTAURS ARE SAID TO BE AN HONORABLE RACE, BUT THEY SERVE THE GODS OF EVIL.

AND YET, THIS ONE HAS DESERTED HIS POST AND HIS PEOPLE TO UPHOLD HIS IDEALS AND HIS HONOR.

MY THANKS.

BY MY ANCESTORS TWENTY GENERATIONS BACK, I WILL NOT REST UNTIL I HAVE BALANCED THE SCALE. YOU HAVE MY OATH ON THAT.

THERE IS NO NEED. IT... IT WAS MY DUTY.

NEVERTHELESS, I WILL HONOR MY OATH AS I SEE FIT.

LET IT NOT BE SAID THAT KAZ IS LESS THAN HIS ANCESTORS.

WELL, KAZ...

YOU MAY COME WITH ME, OR GO BACK TO YOUR OWN. WHATEVER YOU DESIRE.

YOU MAY FIND THE KNIGHTHOOD LEERY OF ACCEPTING YOU AS A DESERTER.

I KNOW SOME OF WHAT YOU FEEL, KNIGHT OF SOLAMNIA.

I UNDERSTAND ALL TOO WELL OUR MANY DIFFERENCES.

STILL, I OWE YOU A DEBT AND WOULD RATHER FACE YOUR COMRADES THAN RETURN TO MY OWN RANKS AND TO A SLOW TORTURE BEFORE I AM EXECUTED.

I HAVE NO DESIRE TO FACE OGRES' TENDER MERCIES.

WE HAD BEST BE ON OUR WAY. THE SCENT OF DEATH WILL CERTAINLY DRAW VISITORS.

LEAD ON, THEN.

MY NAME, FRIEND KAZ, IS HUMA.

HUMA. A STRONG NAME, THAT.

A WARRIOR'S NAME.

A WARRIOR...? PERHAPS, SOMEDAY...

...I FIND YOUR KNIGHTS OF SOLAMNIA VERY INTERESTING, HUMA. A MINOTAUR HOLDS HONOR ABOVE ALL.

WELL, HOPEFULLY WE'LL SOON CATCH UP WITH MY COLUMN AND YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT US.

CAN YOU MAKE OUT THOSE RIDERS?

IT COULD BE ANYONE. LIKELY AS NOT, TROUBLE. THE WARLORD'S ELITE ***BLACK GUARD***, PERHAPS. OR PERHAPS ***RENEGADES***.

RIGHT. LET'S KEEP GOING...

I'VE NOT HEARD OF RENEGADES. WHAT ARE THEY?

UNSCHOOLED SORCERERS. MAD MAGES. THOSE WHO'VE MANAGED TO ESCAPE THE NOTICE OF THE ORDERS OF MAGIC.

NOT ALL ARE EVIL, THOUGH IT IS SAID THAT ONE WITH TREMENDOUS POWER HAS MADE A PACT WITH THE ***DARK QUEEN*** HERSELF.

HMM.

IT IS EVEN SAID THAT SHE IS SO DESPERATE FOR VICTORY NOW THAT SHE HAS SHED HER OWN BLACK ROBES.

I KNOW MORE ABOUT MAGIC THAN MOST OF MY COMRADES.

MY BEST- MY ONLY --CHILDHOOD FRIEND TURNED LEFT TO TEST HIS FATE AS A WIZARD AROUND THE SAME TIME I BEGAN THE PATH TOWARDS KNIGHTHOOD.

I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN YEARS...

WE'VE GOT COMPANY OF SOME SORT.

WE MUST BE CAREFUL, KAZ.

AGAINST THIS SAD RABBLE? YOU NEEDN'T BOTHER. I CAN TAKE THESE ALL BY MYSELF.

NO! THAT'S MURDER!

I THINK THAT WE SEE THE WORLD IN VERY DIFFERENT WAYS, FRIEND HUMA. THEY OUTNUMBER US, AND THEY ARE A THREAT.

THESE PEOPLE HAVE LOST EVERYTHING. THEIR HOMES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED, THEIR FRIENDS AND FAMILIES KILLED.

IF THEY COME CLOSER, I WILL STRIKE NO MATTER WHAT YOU SAY.

ALL THEY CAN SEE IN KAZ IS THE COLLECTIVE EVIL THEY'VE ENDURED, AND A CHANCE TO DESTROY IT TO HELP EASE THEIR OWN SUFFERING.

I WILL NOT STAND AND DIE AT THEIR HANDS.

STOP! HE MEANS YOU NO HARM!

STEP ASIDE!

WE WANT HIM!

HE'S GOT TO PAY FOR WHAT HE'S DONE!

HE'S DONE NOTHING TO YOU!

HE'S ONE OF THEM! WHAT DOES IT MATTER WHETHER HE WAS THE ONE WHO KILLED MY CHILDREN?

IF HE'S NOT DONE IT HERE, HE'S DONE IT ELSEWHERE!

I'M WARNING YOU!

STAY BACK!

I SENSE THE ANTICIPATION IN HIS VOICE.

HE WILL NOT BACK DOWN.

HAVE NO FEAR, HUMA. WE WILL CRUSH THEM.

KAZ, YOU'D BETTER RUN!

THEY'LL KILL YOU NOW, HUMA. KILL YOU FOR AIDING ME. BETTER WE STAND AND FIGHT.

PALADINE!

THERE *MUST* BE A PEACEFUL WAY TO RESOLVE THIS...

... WIND?

A STRONG GUST, TOO.

AS IF THERE'S A...

D...
DR...
DRA...

THE LEGEND CONTINUES IN ISSUE 2!

NO!

WHUMP

A KNIGHT OF SOLAMNIA.

YOU ARE FAR FROM YOUR COMRADES.

WHAT DO YOU DO OUT HERE?

ARE YOU SEEKING THIS GARBAGE?

REST ASSURED, THE MINOTAUR WILL GO NOWHERE.

NOT WHILE THE POWER OF MY WILL HOLDS HIM.

A SILVER DRAGON, ONE OF THE *DRAGONS OF LIGHT*...

I'VE SEEN THEM COMING AND GOING, BUT NEVER THIS CLOSE...

ARE YOU WELL?

PLEASE!

DON'T HARM HIM!

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!

WHY DO YOU WISH TO SPARE THE LIFE OF THIS CREATURE?

IS THERE INFORMATION YOU DESIRE?

I CAN WRENCH IT FROM HIM WITH LITTLE TROUBLE.

HE IS MY COMPANION.

HE HAS TURNED FROM THE EVIL OF THE DARK QUEEN.

THE MINOTAUR WOULD HAVE STRUCK ME.

IT IS OBVIOUS THAT HE MEANT ME GREAT PHYSICAL HARM.

HOW, THEN, CAN I JUSTIFY YOUR CLAIMS?

YOU MUST TAKE MY WORD.

I HAVE NO PROOF.

I BEG YOUR PARDON, KNIGHT OF SOLAMNIA.

I DID NOT MEAN THAT I HAD NO FAITH IN YOUR WORDS.

YOU MUST ADMIT, IT IS NOT EVERY DAY THAT ONE FINDS A MINOTAUR FIGHTING SIDE BY SIDE WITH ONE OF YOUR KIND.

NO OFFENSE WAS TAKEN.

AND WHAT OF THEM?

THEIR FEAR AND ANGER IS UNDERSTANDABLE.

THEY'VE SUFFERED MUCH.

I HOLD NOTHING AGAINST THEM.

YOU PEOPLE TRAVEL OFF-COURSE.

TURN TO THE SOUTHWEST.

THERE ARE CLERICS OF MISHAKAL WHO WILL CARE FOR YOUR INJURED AND GIVE YOU FOOD.

TELL ANY OTHERS YOU MEET ON YOUR WAY.

AS FOR THIS ONE...

IF I RELEASE HIM, HIS WELL-BEING IS YOUR AFFAIR.

I HAVE AS LITTLE LOVE FOR HIS KIND AS THOSE UNFORTUNATES DO.

I CANNOT PROMISE HIS REACTION WHEN YOU RELEASE HIM.

HE IS QUICK TO ANGER.

A TRAIT OF THE MINOTAURS.

IF THEY WERE NOT CONSTANTLY KILLING ONE ANOTHER IN THEIR CONTESTS OF STRENGTH AND RANK, I THINK THEY WOULD HAVE OVERRUN ANSALON LONG BEFORE THIS.

VERY WELL.

I EASILY COULD HAVE CRUSHED YOU, MINOTAUR.

YOU SAVED MY LIFE ONCE, KNIGHT HUMA.

IT APPEARS YOU HAVE DONE SO AGAIN, ONLY THIS TIME WITH WORDS.

I SHALL NEVER BE ABLE TO SUFFICIENTLY REPAY THE DEBT.

DEBTS, AGAIN!

I WANT NOTHING FROM YOU, SAVE PEACE.

WILL YOU PUT AWAY THE AX?

I HAVE NO INTEREST IN YOU.

HUMA IS THE ONE WHO SHOULD DECIDE.

AS I HAVE SAID, I CANNOT GO BACK.

WHAT IS TO BECOME OF ME?

ME?

YOU'VE SHOWN EXCELLENT JUDGMENT SO FAR.

WOULD THAT MORE OF THE EARTHBOUND RACES SHOWED SUCH COMMON SENSE.

WE MUST JOIN THE COLUMN.

IF YOU TRULY WISH TO PROVE YOURSELF TO OTHERS THAN MYSELF, YOU'LL HAVE TO TELL THEM WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THE OGRES' MOVEMENTS AND MAKE THEM BELIEVE YOU.

YOU *DO* KNOW SOMETHING OF USE TO THEM, DON'T YOU?

I KNOW MORE THAN I SHOULD.

IF YOU CAN CONVINCE THEM NOT TO SLAY ME OUT OF HAND, I WILL DO AS YOU SAY.

PERHAPS WHAT HELP I CAN GIVE YOU WILL HASTEN THE DAY MY PEOPLE ARE FREE ONCE MORE.

YOU'LL HAVE TO GIVE ME THAT AX...

I CANNOT GO AMONG THEM UNARMED!

IT WOULD BE A LOSS OF FACE!

THIS IS NOT OUR WAY!

YOU'RE NOT AMONG YOUR PEOPLE!

YOU'RE AMONG MINE!

IF YOU STEP AMONG THEM ARMED WITH THAT WELL-WORN AX, THERE WILL BE NO HOPE FOR COMPROMISE.

AT THE VERY WORST, YOU WILL BE DEAD.

AT THE VERY LEAST, YOU WILL BECOME A PRISONER.

THE KNIGHT'S ASSESSMENT IS QUITE ACCURATE.

YOU WOULD DO BEST TO LISTEN TO HIM.

BY MY ANCESTORS...

YOU WOULD STRIP A WARRIOR OF HIS HONOR?

BUT ALL RIGHT, KNIGHT HUMA.

I'LL SURRENDER MY AX.

WHEN THE TIME COMES, AND NOT A MOMENT BEFORE.

FAIR ENOUGH, KAZ.

THANK YOU.

I WAS FLYING TO REJOIN MY KIN IN NORTHERN ERGOTH WHEN I CAUGHT SIGHT OF YOU.

THE SITUATION WAS UNIQUE, SO I DECIDED TO LAND.

I SHOULD MOVE ON, BUT IT WILL NOT TAKE ME FAR OUT OF MY WAY IF I TRANSPORT THE TWO OF YOU TO YOUR DESTINATION.

HOW DO WE HOLD ON?

IF I FLY SLOWLY, YOU SHOULD HAVE NO TROUBLE HANGING ON WITH YOUR ARMS AND LEGS.

MANY HAVE DONE IT BEFORE, ALTHOUGH YOU ARE THE FIRST TO FLY WITH ME.

IT WILL SAVE YOU MUCH TIME AND HARDSHIP.

COME ON, KAZ!

MY PEOPLE ARE CREATURES OF THE LAND, SAILORS OF THE SEA.

WE ARE NOT BIRDS.

IT IS PERFECTLY SAFE.

A BABE COULD RIDE WITHOUT FEAR.

A BABE WOULD BE FOOLISH ENOUGH. I AM NOT.

THERE'S NOTHING TO FEAR, KAZ.

THAT REMARK STUNG HIM DEEPLY, AS I KNEW IT WOULD.

AFTER ALL, IF A MERE *HUMAN* CAN FACE THIS CHALLENGE, THERE'S NO REASON A MINOTAUR SHOULDN'T.

IT'S HARD TO KEEP MYSELF FROM CHUCKLING AT HOW *TENSE* HE IS.

ARE YOU BOTH PREPARED?

AS BEST WE CAN BE, I GUESS.

WILL WE FLY HIGH?

NOT AS HIGH AS YOU MIGHT LIKE, BUT I DO NOT THINK YOU WILL BE DISAPPOINTED.

THIS IS FANTASTIC!

PERHAPS YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN A DRAGON YOURSELF!

THEN YOU'D SEE THE WORLD AS I SEE IT!

HMMM...

FOR A MOMENT THERE, IT WAS AS IF ALL MY PROBLEMS HAD VANISHED ONCE WE TOOK TO THE AIR.

BUT NOW, SEEING THE BATTLE BELOW... THE ENORMOUS *SCALE* OF IT...

A FUTILE STRUGGLE HERE.

CRYNUS PICKS AND PICKS, AND THE KNIGHTHOOD'S COMMANDERS RETURN THE FAVOR WITH LITTLE BITES OF THEIR OWN.

NEITHER WILL GAIN FROM THIS.

OBVIOUSLY, WE CANNOT LAND HERE. KYRE IS CERTAINLY LOST, TO BOTH SIDES, IT WOULD SEEM.

THESE FIELDS OF WHEAT WILL FEED NO ONE.

THERE IS HOPE, THEN.

THE SUPPLY LINES OF THE OGRES MUST BE STRAINED.

THE KNIGHTHOOD SITS MORE SECURELY WITH ITS OWN.

BUT THEIR STRENGTH IS NOT AS GREAT AS THAT OF THE OGRES.

LOOK!

DRAGONS!

SIX, AT LEAST!

ALL BEARING RIDERS!

I CANNOT FIGHT THEM ALL.

JUMP WHEN THE EARTH IS CLOSE.

I WILL ATTEMPT TO LEAD THEM ASTRAY.

YOU MUST JUMP WHEN I SAY SO!

ARE YOU READY?

IT GALLS ME TO FLEE FROM ANY BATTLE, EVEN AMONG THE CLOUDS.

IS THERE NO WAY WE CAN HELP, HUMA?

NO, WE'D BEST JUMP.

AS YOU WISH.

I'M SLOWING! READY YOURSELVES!

NOW!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

YOU CANNOT FIGHT THEM ALONE!

TOO LATE!

DON'T BE A FOOL!

SURRSH

SCRASSH

CLANG

SPLREECH

GREECH

NO WAY OUT.

WE'RE FINISHED.

HUH?

THAT'S ODD...

THEY'RE LEAVING?

ARE YOU INJURED?

NO. WHAT OF YOU? DO YOU REQUIRE AID?

I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN HELP, BUT I CAN TRY.

I CAN HEAL MYSELF. I MERELY REQUIRE REST.

WHAT CONCERNS ME MORE IS THE ODD CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE BATTLE.

THAT WAS MORE THAN SIMPLY A PATROL.

I CANNOT PUT MY MIND TO THE ANSWER, BUT I BELIEVE THIS IS A SIGN.

WE MUST PICK UP KAZ AND HURRY TO LORD OSWAL.

HE WILL WANT TO KNOW ALL.

IT APPEARS WE HAVE MORE VISITORS.

ONES WHO, I BELIEVE, WILL NOT BE PLEASED TO DISCOVER A MINOTAUR IN THEIR MIDST.

ONCE THEY DISCOVER KAZ, THEY'LL RUN HIM DOWN.

AT THE COST OF A FEW OF THEIR OWN LIVES, NO DOUBT...

HUMA!

QUICK!

I HAVE A PLAN...

LISTEN TO THAT...

THEY'RE CHEERING!

THEY MUST THINK THIS IS THE END OF A MARAUDING MINOTAUR.

NO FIGHTING!

THEY WILL KILL ME!

AT LEAST LET ME FIGHT TO THE DEATH, NOT STAND THERE LIKE SOME INEFFECTUAL GULLY DWARF!

I SAID NO FIGHTING.

AS YOU WISH.

I WILL PUT MY FAITH IN YOU WHO HAVE SAVED MY LIFE TWICE.

IT SEEMS BENNETT IS NOT RID OF YOU AFTER ALL, HUMA..

RENNARD!

BIND THE MINOTAUR.

I'M SURE THAT LORD OSWAL WILL BE MOST INTERESTED IN HIM AND IN WHAT HE IS DOING THIS FAR FROM THE ACTION.

TRY!

THE FIRST ONE WHO LAYS A HAND ON ME WILL NEVER DO SO AGAIN!

INSOLENT BEAST!

YOU WON'T LIVE LONG ENOUGH!

NO!

HE'S NO ENEMY.

HE WAS RUNNING FROM THE OGRES.

I FOUND HIM A PRISONER OF GOBLINS AND RESCUED HIM.

HE KILLED AN OGRE IN ORDER TO SAVE HUMAN LIVES!

I CAN ALREADY HEAR THEM MAKING SNIDE COMMENTS ABOUT MY GULLIBILITY.

MY FACE MUST BE GLARING CRIMSON RIGHT NOW.

THIS IS THE HONOR OF THE KNIGHTS OF SOLAMNIA?

THIS IS HOW THEY TREAT ONE OF THEIR OWN?

PERHAPS I WAS MISTAKEN TO BELIEVE THE KNIGHTHOOD MIGHT BE AS HONORABLE AS MY OWN RACE!

I'LL HAVE YOUR HEAD, MINOTAUR!

YOU'LL DO NOTHING OF THE SORT, KNIGHT CONRAD.

IN TRUTH, THERE IS NOTHING ANY OF YOU COULD SAY AGAINST HUMA'S ABILITY TO JUDGE.

AND YOU KNOW IT.

ACT LIKE KNIGHTS, NOT PETTY ERGOTHIANS OR HIGH, MIGHTY ELVES.

THE MINOTAUR IS PLACED IN YOUR CUSTODY, HUMA.

I KNOW MORE ABOUT THEIR KIND THAN THESE OTHERS APPARENTLY DO.

IF HE WILL PLEDGE TO COME ALONG WITH US IN PEACE, THAT WILL BE ALL THE ASSURANCE I NEED.

I PLEDGE TO YOU THAT I WILL COME IN PEACE...

...AND THAT *I*, AT LEAST, WILL ACCEPT HUMA'S JUDGMENT IN ALL MATTERS.

AH, KAZ...

YOU'RE ONLY MAKING THINGS HARDER FOR YOURSELF BY CRITICIZING YOUR CAPTORS.

THESE KNIGHTS ARE ALREADY UNEASY ABOUT HAVING SO POWERFUL A PRISONER RIDING LOOSE AMONG THEM..

WE HAVE A FEW EXTRA HORSES.

ONE OF THEM IS TALL AND STRONG ENOUGH TO CARRY THE MINOTAUR, I BELIEVE.

WHEN YOU ARE SATISFIED, I WANT THE TWO OF YOU UP FRONT.

WE HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS, AND YOU, KNIGHT HUMA, MUST HAVE A RATHER INTERESTING REPORT.

WHAT HAPPENED HERE?

WHAT USUALLY HAPPENS, HUMA?

MAGES FIGHT THEIR OWN PRIVATE WARS AND TEAR UP THE LANDS, LEAVING NOTHING BUT ROCKS AND CRATERS FOR THOSE BOUND TO THE EARTH.

DRAGONS BURN OR FREEZE OR TEAR UP THE REMAINING FERTILE, GREEN REGIONS.

BY THE TIME THE ARMIES CLASH, THERE IS LITTLE IF ANYTHING WORTH FIGHTING FOR.

DID WE LOSE?

STALEMATE.

THE FIGHTING JUST MOVED NORTH, ALTHOUGH WE WERE SENT TO ASSURE THAT THEIR NORTHERLY RETREAT WAS NO FEINT.

WE WERE JUST ABOUT TO TURN BACK WHEN WE SAW YOU.

SIX OF THEM.

ALL CLAD IN BLACK AND ALL RIDING REDS, SAVE THE LEADER, WHO RODE A HUGE BLACK.

THEY SEEMED TO BE SEARCHING UNTIL THEY NOTICED US.

I TRIED TO BUY SOME TIME, BUT YOUR FELLOW KNIGHT REFUSED TO LEAVE ME.

HE INSISTED ON JOINING THE BATTLE.

YOU DID NOT SEE THE DRAGONRIDERS, THEN?

A HUGE BLACK, YOU SAY?

THE LARGEST.

YOUNG, THOUGH.

THE RIDER CHOSE TO FIGHT US ONE ON ONE.

WE DID, AND THEN A STRANGE THING OCCURRED.

HUMA WOUNDED HIM SEVERELY AND THE BLACK WAS FORCED TO RETREAT FROM BATTLE.

RATHER THAN SEEKING REVENGE, THE OTHERS JOINED THE BLACK TO SEEK HELP FOR THEIR CRIPPLED LEADER.

DRAGONRIDERS, YOU SAY?

THEY WOULD HAVE SLAUGHTERED US HAD THEY ALL COME AT ONCE.

I STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND.

I CAN ONLY THANK YOU FOR THE SERVICE YOU HAVE GIVEN ONE OF OUR OWN.

WILL YOU BE JOINING US?

I AM UNFAMILIAR WITH THE HEALING OF DRAGON WOUNDS, BUT IF THE POWERS OF A CLERIC OF MISHAKAL WILL HELP, THERE WILL BE A FEW WITH THE MAIN FORCE.

MY OWN TALENTS WILL SUFFICE.

I MERELY NEED REST.

I WILL REJOIN MY KIN.

YOU MIGHT POSSIBLY SEE ME AFTERWARD...

IT HAS BEEN FASCINATING TO KNOW YOU EVEN THIS BRIEF TIME, KNIGHT HUMA.

GOOD TIDINGS TO YOU.

MAY PALADINE WATCH OVER YOU.

THESE RIDERS...

HAVE YOU EVER SEEN OR HEARD OF THEM BEFORE, HUMA?

SHOULD I HAVE?

PERHAPS. MINOTAUR...

MY NAME IS KAZ.

KAZ, THEN. SURELY, YOU MUST KNOW THEM?

THEY ARE THE BLACK GUARD.

ONE OF THEIR MANY NAMES.

THEY SERVE THE RENEGADE MAGE *GALAN DRACOS* AND THE QUEEN'S WARLORD, *CRYNUS*.

WHAT OF THE WARLORD HIMSELF?

HE IS A GIANT, ALTHOUGH WHETHER AN OGRE OR HUMAN OR SOMETHING ELSE, ONLY A SPECIAL FEW SEEM TO KNOW.

HE IS A MASTER STRATEGIST WHO IS WILLING TO TAKE CHANCES, EVEN WITH HIMSELF.

HIS FAVORITE MOUNT...

...MOUNT IS...

WHAT I BELIEVE HE WAS GOING TO ADD WAS THAT THE FAVORED MOUNT OF CRYNUS IS A HUGE BLACK DRAGON CALLED *CHARR*.

BOTH MAN AND BEAST ARE OBSESSIVE RISK-TAKERS AND ONE-TO-ONE COMBAT IS SOMETHING THEY RELISH GREATLY.

AND... I FOUGHT AGAINST HIM.

AND LIVED.

I UNDERSTAND THE WARLORD TAKES HIS BATTLES VERY PERSONALLY.

AND I'M CERTAIN THE WARLORD LIVED, TOO, DEEP AS HIS WOUND WAS.

WHICH MEANS HE WILL LIKELY SEEK ME OUT AGAIN.

TO REGAIN FACE.

TO REGAIN HONOR.

TO MORE THAN BALANCE THE SCORE.

I CAN'T HELP BUT WISH WE COULD MOVE MUCH, *MUCH* FASTER.

AS FAST AS RENNARD JUST INCREASED THE PACE...

THE LEGEND CONTINUES IN ISSUE 3!

Kael

KYRE.

NOT LONG AGO, THIS CITY WAS TEEMING WITH LIFE.

NOW IT IS LITTLE MORE THAN A REMINDER THAT DEATH HAS SWEPT THROUGH THE REGION WITH A THOROUGH FURY.

THE STENCH OF DEATH IS OVERPOWERING. THE BODIES OF KNIGHTS, OGRES, WOMEN, CHILDREN...

I WANT TO RETCH.

PALADINE, GIVE ME STRENGTH. DON'T LET ME BE SICK.

WE WERE TO MEET UP WITH THE OTHER KNIGHTS HERE. THE FRONT HAS MOVED, AND THE KNIGHTS WITH THEM.

KYRE IS NO MORE.

WE FAILED.

HOURS LATER, WE SPOT THE OUTER FRINGE OF THE SOUTHERN FLANK.

WHEN THEY FIRST SEE US, THEY THINK WE'RE REINFORCEMENTS. SOON THEY REALIZE THAT WE'RE ALREADY PART OF THEIR FORCES.

WHO IS IN CHARGE HERE?

LORD KILLIAN. YOU WILL NOT FIND HIM HERE, THOUGH.

HE HAS GONE OUT AMONG THE MEN IN AN ATTEMPT TO BOOST SPIRITS.

PERHAPS YOU WILL ASSIST US, THEN.

WHERE WILL WE FIND LORD OSWAL'S COMMAND HEADQUARTERS?

WHEN OUR PATROL SET OUT, IT WAS LOCATED NEAR HERE.

THE COMMAND HAS MOVED TO THE NORTHEAST, ABOUT ANOTHER DAY'S JOURNEY FROM HERE.

VERY WELL.

LET'S MOVE!

BY MY ANCESTORS!

WE'RE CHASING OUR OWN TAILS.

KAZ!

I WONDER WHAT LORD OSWAL WILL SAY WHEN I GIVE MY REPORT?

LORD TRAKE HAS NEVER BEEN FOND OF HIS BROTHER'S DECISION TO SUPPORT MY JOINING THE KNIGHTHOOD, AND IF I EVER WERE TO FAIL AS A KNIGHT, LORD OSWAL COULD STAND TO LOSE MUCH INFLUENCE AND POWER.

WITHOUT LORD OSWAL'S BRILLIANT LEADERSHIP, IT'S HARD TO SAY *WHAT* WOULD BECOME OF OUR ARMY...

KRA-BOOOOM

LOOK.

THE QUEEN'S MINIONS ARE AT WORK AGAIN.

WILL THE MINOTAUR FIGHT FOR US IF YOU ASK HIM, HUMA?

ASK ME YOURSELF, GHOUL!

WILL YOU FIGHT FOR US?

THE DECISION IS YOURS, KAZ.

THEN I WILL FIGHT, AND GLADLY, AS IT WILL GIVE ME A CHANCE TO STRETCH MY MUSCLES.

BESIDES, I WAS OUTCAST FROM MY KIND THE MOMENT I CHOSE TO SMITE THE OGRE AND RUN.

FOR HONOR! FOR PALADINE!

THEY WOULD KILL ME THE MOMENT THEY CAPTURE ME.

WITH YOU, I STILL HAVE A CHANCE TO PROVE THAT MY HONOR IS NOT DEAD.

THEN LET US ADD OUR STRENGTH TO OUR BRETHREN!

KRA BOOM

ARGH!

KRAK

FWOOSH

KRABOOM

WOOOSH

WHACK

HA-HA!

AAH!

HUMA!

KLANG

KLANGG

THUD

KRAK

ARRRGH!

CRASH

RRAMMBL

I NEVER THOUGHT THAT DEATH WOULD BE SO BEAUTIFUL...

...OR KIND.

SHE'S BEAUTIFUL.

HER HAIR... SO BEAUTIFUL...

ARE YOU EVER PLANNING TO WAKE UP?

A LITTLE LIGHT SHOULDN'T KILL YOU, NOT AFTER OGRES AND DRAGONS FAILED TO.

KAZ?

A GOOD GUESS.

WHAT HAPPENED TO ME?

WHAT DIDN'T? FIRST, YOU NEARLY LOOKED RIGHT INTO THE FLAT OF AN AX – DON'T WORRY, IT ONLY CREASED ONE SIDE OF YOUR HEAD.

YOU SLIPPED AND FELL AND NEARLY GOT TRAMPLED TO DEATH. THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT YOU WERE UNCONSCIOUS ALL OF THE TIME.

IT'S A WONDER YOU DIDN'T BREAK ANY BONES, FRIEND HUMA. YOU CERTAINLY ARE BRUISED ENOUGH.

HE IS AWAKE?

EVERYTHING HURTS.

IT SHOULD.

TELL ME, ARE YOU USUALLY THIS CARELESS?

OUCH.

EVEN *SMILING* HURTS.

AWAKE, ALIVE, AND IN LESS PAIN THAN HE THOUGHT, APPARENTLY.

I SHALL LEAVE YOU IN THE HANDS OF THIS HEALER, HUMA.

WHILE YOU HAVE BEEN RESTING, I HAVE BEEN PUT TO WORK IDENTIFYING WHAT I CAN OF MY FORMER MASTERS' BATTLEPLANS.

THEY ALLOW YOU FREEDOM OF THE CAMP?

=SNORT=

ONLY AS LONG AS I'M ACCOMPANIED BY TWO ARMED GUARDS. THEY DEIGNED TO ALLOW ME TO VISIT YOU PRIVATELY.

YOU WRONG US, KAZ.

NO, I MAY WRONG YOU AND A FEW OTHERS...

...BUT I DO NOT WRONG THE KNIGHTHOOD.

IS HE RIGHT? DOES THE KNIGHTHOOD DESERVE SUCH SCORN?

IT CAN'T BE.

YOU HAVE INTERESTING COMPANIONS.

WHAT?

SHE IS SO BEAUTIFUL. I WONDER IF SHE IS PART ELVEN...

ARE YOU QUITE THROUGH?

I APOLOGIZE. I DIDN'T MEAN TO ANNOY YOU, MILADY.

I NEVER SAID I WAS ANNOYED.

I AM ALSO NO *'MILADY'*. *GWYNETH* WILL DO NICELY. IT IS MY NAME, AFTER ALL.

MY NAME IS HUMA.

YES, I KNOW. BOTH THE MINOTAUR AND THE KNIGHT WHO BROUGHT YOU IN USED YOUR NAME SEVERAL TIMES. I'D NEVER SEEN A MINOTAUR BEFORE THIS ONE.

KAZ IS A FRIEND.

YOU SAID A KNIGHT. DO YOU KNOW WHICH ONE?

I COULD NOT FORGET. HE WAS MUCH LIKE A DEAD MAN IN FORM AND VOICE. I FELT, THOUGH, A CERTAIN SADNESS WITHIN HIM.

I'VE NEVER HEARD RENNARD DESCRIBED *QUITE* LIKE THAT...

ARE YOU BETTER?

YES. DO I HAVE YOU TO THANK FOR THIS MIRACLE?

NO, I AM ONLY ASSISTING THE HEALERS.

ARGH!

DO NOT TRY THAT AGAIN.

I DO NOT THINK I COULD. DID NOT ONE OF THE CLERICS HEAL ME?

THERE ARE ONLY A VERY FEW OF THEM IN CAMP. YOU WILL HAVE TO ACCEPT WHAT LITTLE AID THEY COULD GIVE YOU. EVEN HEALERS HAVE THEIR LIMITS.

WHERE ARE WE?

IN PART OF THE WESTERNMOST WOODS OF SOLAMNIA. YOU WERE UNCONSCIOUS FOR A DAY'S RIDE. WE ARE ABOUT THAT FAR FROM THE FRONT.

WE WON?

NO ONE WON. IT WAS THE SAME AS ALWAYS. IF NOT FOR YOUR GROUP, THE OGRES MIGHT HAVE BROKEN THROUGH. FORTUNATELY, THEY HAVE FAILED AGAIN.

ENOUGH OF THIS WAR TALK. DO YOU FEEL LIKE EATING SOMETHING?

IT'S NOT AS BAD AS IT LOOKS, HUMA. TASTE SOME.

I'M SORRY TO LEAVE YOU, BUT I DO HAVE OTHER TASKS. I'LL LOOK IN ON YOU FROM TIME TO TIME, I PROMISE THAT.

THANK YOU AGAIN.

THE MINOTAUR SAID YOU WERE AWAKE AND RECUPERATING. I WAS PLEASED TO HEAR THAT.

THE FLAT TONE OF HIS VOICE SOUNDS LIKE HE'S READING OFF A SUPPLY LIST.

BUT STILL... HE'S ONE OF THE FEW KNIGHTS WHO CARES ENOUGH TO VISIT ME.

KEEP YOUR GUARD UP AT *ALL* TIMES, HUMA. IT IS YOUR ONE FAILING.

THAT AND BEING STRUCK ON THE HEAD.

YES, YOU MUST STOP THAT AS WELL. IT COULD PROVE DETRIMENTAL.

WHAT GOES ON? GWYNETH – ?

THE YOUNG WOMAN?

YES – SHE SAID THAT WE WERE BACK AT A STALEMATE ONCE MORE.

PRAISE ME?

I QUOTE: 'THANKS IN PART TO THAT ONE'S ASTOUNDING LUCK, THE WARLORD CRYNUS MAY BE DEAD OR AT LEAST INCAPACITATED.'

AND I GUESS I *WAS* LUCKY.

A TRUE KNIGHT WOULD HAVE MADE BETTER USE OF THE OPPORTUNITY AND ASSURED HIMSELF OF THE WARLORD'S DESTRUCTION.

≥SIGH≤

FOR THE MOMENT, THAT APPEARS TO BE WHERE THINGS ARE.

BENNETT CLAIMS THIS IS A SIGN THAT VICTORY IS OURS. HE REPEATS OVER AND OVER THAT THE BIG PUSH BY CRYNUS HAS CRUMBLED. NO ONE HAS SEEN OR HEARD OF CRYNUS SINCE YOUR BRIEF BATTLE WITH HIM. BENNETT HAS EVEN GONE SO FAR AS TO PRAISE YOU IN HIS OWN FASHION.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, HUMA. STOP IT. YOU ARE EVERY PART THE KNIGHT THAT BENNETT AND HIS LAPDOGS ARE. MORE SO. YOU'VE NOT LOST SIGHT OF THE TRUE WORLD.

HOW LONG BEFORE THEY RELEASE ME?

WHEN YOU'RE READY, NO SOONER. THERE'LL BE MORE THAN ENOUGH WAITING FOR YOU WHEN YOU'RE FIT.

LORD OSWAL - DOES HE HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY?

THE HIGH WARRIOR WISHES YOU THE BEST AND SPEEDIEST OF RECOVERIES. HE SAYS HE STILL HAS THE UTMOST FAITH IN YOUR ABILITIES.

WHICH IS THE HIGH WARRIOR'S WAY OF SAYING HOW PROUD HE IS OF ME.

THAT'S GOOD TO KNOW...

REST WELL, HUMA. I WILL ATTEMPT TO SEE YOU WHEN NEXT I'M FREE.

MY MIND IS SWIMMING NOW.

CAN I EVER TRULY BE A KNIGHT SUCH AS BENNETT, LORD OSWAL OR RENNARD?

WILL CRYNUS SEEK VENGEANCE ON SOMEONE AS INSIGNIFICANT AS ME?

SCRAAAPE

HUH?

SOMETHING'S MOVING AGAINST THE WALL, TESTING ITS STRENGTH.

AND IT SMELLS... ODD.

WHAT *IS* THAT?

CLERIC?

I AM BRODERIN. MAY I BE OF ASSISTANCE TO YOU?

ARE – ARE THERE ANY WOLVES NEAR THE CAMP? WOLVES OR LARGE DOGS?

WOLVES? DOGS? THERE MAY BE A FEW OF THE LATTER, BUT NOT ANYWHERE NEAR HERE. AS FOR WOLVES

YOU MUST BE MISTAKEN, MY SON, OR PERHAPS YOU ARE SUFFERING DELUSIONS DUE TO YOUR WOUNDS.

I WILL HAVE SOMEONE TAKE A LOOK AROUND. PERHAPS A STRAY HOUND ESCAPED FROM SOMEWHERE. IT IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE.

AND PERHAPS I'M JUST TOO TIRED.

A WOLF AMONGST THE RANKS OF PALADINE'S KNIGHTS? I THINK NOT. THERE ARE NO WOLVES SAVE THOSE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FIELD, MY SON. REGRETTABLY, MOST OF THEM ARE OF THE INTELLIGENT KIND. WHY DO YOU ASK?

I THOUGHT I SAW ONE.

ARE YOU POSITIVE?

IT'S TIME TO GET SOME SLEEP.

HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY?

I AM SICK AND TIRED OF THAT TENT AND MORE THAN HAPPY TO SEE THE WORLD, EVEN IF IT IS JUST THE CAMP.

WILL YOU BE GOING SOON?

HUMA!

GWYNETH...

WHERE DID SHE GO?

HAVE I COME AT AN INAPPROPRIATE TIME? YOU HAVE MY APOLOGIES IF I HAVE INTRUDED.

I SHOULD APOLOGIZE TO YOU. IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU, KAZ.

I HAD NO IDEA YOUR KIND COULD ASK SO MANY QUESTIONS - AND OVER AND OVER! I HAVE BEEN DRAINED OF ALL KNOWLEDGE, YET STILL THEY PRESS FOR MORE.

THEY'RE DESPERATE, KAZ. WE WANT TO BREAK--

THE MAGES ARE EXTREMELY NERVOUS. I CAN SMELL THEIR FEAR. IT SICKENS ME ON OCCASION.

WHAT FRIGHTENS THEM?

THE UNKNOWN. THEY ARE QUITE ACCUSTOMED TO DEALING WITH THEIR BLACK-ROBED COUNTERPARTS, BUT IT IS RUMORED THAT GALAN DRACOS HAS UNLEASHED HIS FELLOW RENEGADES. YOU SAW PART OF THE MAGICAL BATTLE?

WHO COULD NOT? IT FAIRLY COVERED THE HEAVENS.

THERE WERE A DOZEN POWERFUL MAGES ON OUR SIDE WHEN WE ENTERED. FOUR OF THOSE DIED, AND ANOTHER MAY NEVER REGAIN FULL USE OF HIS MIND AND BODY. DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY OPPOSED THEM?

HOW MANY?

THREE.

THREE?

THEY MUST HAVE BEEN POWERFUL, BUT HOW DO THE MAGES KNOW THEY WERE NOT BLACK-ROBED WIZARDS?

TWO WERE BLACK ROBES, SO THEY SAY. THE SURVIVOR, WHO ESCAPED, WAS NOT. HIS POWERS WERE TOO WILD AND UNPREDICTABLE FOR ONE BROUGHT UP UNDER THE TUTELAGE OF THE THREE ORDERS.

A RENEGADE

MORE THAN THAT, THEY WOULD NOT SAY.

I FEEL MUCH BETTER NOW, OR AT LEAST WELL ENOUGH TO HELP THE CLERICS.

GWENYTH STOPPED BY AGAIN, BUT THE CONVERSATION WAS SHORT AND SERVED LITTLE PURPOSE.

ALMOST AS IF SHE HAD SOMETHING TO SAY, BUT LEFT IT UNSPOKEN.

AND KAZ HAS BEEN SUMMONED AGAIN, MUCH TO HIS IRRITATION.

I WONDER IF THESE INTERROGATIONS OF KAZ ARE WORSE THAN WHAT THE OGRES WOULD DO TO HIM IF HE WERE TO GO BACK.

I SEE THAT YOU ARE MORE THAN FIT ENOUGH TO RESUME YOUR DUTIES AS A KNIGHT.

YOU ARE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD TONIGHT. LORD OSWAL THINKS YOU'RE READY FOR SUCH RESPONSIBILITY.

MAY I BE PERMITTED TO CLEAN UP AND SUIT MYSELF?

BY ALL MEANS. I'VE ALREADY ASSIGNED THE WATCHES. WHEN YOU'RE READY, COME SEE ME.

I FEARED SOME OF THE KNIGHTS WOULD RESIST MY APPOINTMENT AS CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD.

SUCH IS NOT THE CASE. THEY'RE EITHER UNFAMILIAR WITH ME OR TOO NEW TO HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY BENNETT'S OPINIONS.

THE REST ARE VETERANS LOYAL TO LORD OSWAL, HERE FOR SAFETY'S SAKE.

THE GUARD'S REPORT SHOWS NOTHING AMISS.

THAT MAKES ME NERVOUS.

COMMAND MAKES ME NERVOUS.

MOST OF THESE MEN ARE MORE EXPERIENCED THAN ME.

WHAT IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG AND ONE OF THEM DIES?

I CAN BARELY TAKE CARE OF MYSELF, AND NOW THEIR LIVES ARE IN MY HANDS.

THE SENTRIES ARE GONE!

ARGH. I SHOULD HAVE ASSIGNED SOMEONE ELSE TO CHECK ON THEM, BUT ON MY FIRST COMMAND, I WANTED TO DO IT PERSONALLY.

WHO KNOWS HOW LONG THEY'VE BEEN MISSING?

I SHOULD WARN LORD OSWAL, OR SEND ANOTHER SENTRY...

NO! THIS IS MY COMMAND.

LOYALTY, DUTY, DEDICATION. SUCH IS THE MEASURE OF A KNIGHT OF THE CROWN.

I MUST GO DEEPER IN THE FOREST. FOLLOW THE LIGHTS...

MUST... FOLLOW... THE LIGHTS...

BRAVE KNIGHT...

...SO SECURE WITH YOUR LITTLE TOYS.

COULD YOU BE THE ONE, I WONDER?

YESSSS.

DRACOS WILL BE PLEASED – EVEN THE WARLORD WILL BE PLEASED. IT CANNOT BE COINCIDENCE. HE HAS HAD HIS HAND IN THIS TO SAVE HIS OWN NECK.

THERE WILL BE NO NEED OF THIS ANYMORE.

HISSSSS...

YEARGHH...

AHHHH!!

ARRRGGH!

CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH

FOOTSTEPS...

HERE, LET ME HELP YOU.

WELL DONE. YOU'VE PINNED HIM TO THE TREE TRUNK.

AN IMPRESSIVE DISPLAY OF STRENGTH AND QUITE DESERVING WHERE THAT ONE WAS CONCERNED.

WHO- ?

SAVE YOUR BREATH FOR WALKING. YOU'VE GONE DEEPER INTO THE FOREST THAN YOU THINK.

MAGIUS!

THE LEGEND CONTINUES IN ISSUE 4!

Rod Reis

MAGIUS!

HUMA, IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU, EVEN UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES. I WONDERED HOW LONG I MIGHT – IF YOU'LL PARDON THE EXPRESSION – KEEP YOU IN THE DARK.

YOU'RE ALIVE.

YOU'RE ALIVE!

YES, I APOLOGIZE.

APOLOGIZE? WHY SHOULD YOU APOLOGIZE?

DO YOU THINK I WAS OUT HERE BY PURE COINCIDENCE, HUMA? I HOPE NOT. IT WAS BECAUSE OF ME THAT YOUR LIFE WAS PLACED IN JEOPARDY.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

ARE WE STILL IN DANGER?

MY SWORD! I HAVE TO GO –

NO!

WE SHOULD NOT STAY HERE ALONE ANY LONGER THAN WE NEED TO. GO BACK WHEN YOU HAVE MEN AT YOUR BACK. THE DREADWOLVES MAY HAVE FLED, BUT I COULD BE WRONG. IT WOULD NOT BE THE FIRST TIME.

THE GODS KNOW, IT WOULD NOT BE THE FIRST TIME.

WHAT WAS THAT BACK THERE? WHAT DID YOU MEAN EARLIER?

I THINK YOU HAD BETTER ASK ONE OF THE RED ROBES BACK AT CAMP. HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO GIVE YOU THE OFFICIAL VERSION.

ARE YOU IN SOME KIND OF TROUBLE?

I CAN HEAR THE KNIGHTS IN THE DISTANCE. SOMEONE HAS NOTICED THE ABSENCE OF SENTRIES. ONE OF WHOM WAS THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD, NO LESS.

I SHOULD *NEVER* HAVE LEFT BY MYSELF. WHAT OF MY DUTY?

TROUBLE OF THE SORT WHICH I WILL BE SURE TO LEAD AWAY FROM YOU NOW. I WAS A *FOOL* TO EVEN THINK OF COMING TO YOU.

WHATEVER YOU HEAR, I HAVE NOT CHANGED, HUMA.

BELIEVE ME!

IF THE TEST DID ANYTHING, IT PROVED THAT!

LISTEN.

THE CREATURES WON'T BOTHER YOU ANY LONGER. IT'S ME THEIR MASTERS ARE AFTER. THEY SENT THEM AFTER ME ONCE THEY LEARNED I WAS GONE.

YOU'RE RUNNING FROM THE DARK QUEEN'S CREATURES.

I MUST LEAVE. YOU KNOW ME, HUMA. YOU KNOW WHAT I AM CAPABLE OF.

BELIEVE IN THAT.

IF THINGS TAKE A TURN, EITHER GOOD OR BAD, I WILL CONTACT YOU.

MAGES... PHAH!

HE DOES NOT WEAR THE BLACK OF THE QUEEN OF DARKNESS.

TAKE THIS THING BACK TO THE CAMP. I WANT TO SEE WHAT THE SPELLCASTERS HAVE TO SAY.

THE REST OF YOU, FAN OUT. MAKE SURE HE LEFT NO SURPRISES BEHIND.

HUMA, YOU STAY WITH ME.

WHO WAS THE OTHER?

THIS COULD BE BAD.

WHEN I OFFERED RENNARD MY REPORT, I DIDN'T MENTION MAGIUS, THOUGH I WENT AGAINST THE OATH AND MEASURE IN DOING SO.

THERE WAS NO ONE.

THERE *WAS* ANOTHER.

I KNOW.

I SEE NO REASON WHY YOU WOULD SEEK TO HIDE THE PRESENCE OF A MAGE, UNLESS...

OBVIOUS. FOR SUCH EFFORT, I CAN THINK OF ONLY ONE YOU WOULD PROTECT - BUT WHY WOULD MAGIUS BE OUT HERE?

I DIDN'T -

YOU ARE A FOOL, HUMA.

A BRAVE, COMPETENT KNIGHT, BUT YOU HAVE TOO MUCH HUMANITY IN YOU, TOO MUCH TRUST IN OTHERS.

A MAGE, ESPECIALLY. YOU CANNOT TRUST MAGES. THEY WILL ALWAYS TURN ON YOU.

THEY ARE TREACHEROUS.

MAGIUS IS NONE OF THOSE THINGS. WE GREW UP TOGETHER. HE WOULD NOT BETRAY WHAT HE BELIEVED IN.

YOU WILL NOT UNDERSTAND UNTIL IT IS TOO LATE.

COME. WE'D BEST RETURN TO CAMP.

I THINK THIS IS SOMETHING LORD OSWAL SHOULD HEAR ABOUT.

I WILL STAY, IF IT PLEASES THE HIGH WARRIOR.

YOU MAY LEAVE OR STAY AS IS YOUR DESIRE, RENNARD.

NORMALLY, LORD ARAK HAWKEYE WOULD TAKE YOUR REPORT, BUT SEEING AS WE ARE DEALING WITH SITUATIONS THAT CHANGE FROM ONE MINUTE TO THE NEXT, I WOULD LIKE US ALL TO HEAR IT IMMEDIATELY. BOTH ARAK AND BENNETT HAVE AGREED TO THIS.

IF YOU WOULD BEGIN, THEN?

MILORD...

I TELL THEM EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED. THE MISSING KNIGHT, THE RENEGADE, THE BATTLE.

EVERYTHING... SAVE FOR MAGIUS.

KNIGHT RENNARD, HAVE YOU ANYTHING TO ADD?

ONLY THAT I HAVE MEN SEARCHING THE WOODS FOR ANY SIGN OF INFESTATION AND THAT I APPOINTED A NEW CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD IN HUMA'S ABSENCE.

RENNARD IS... COVERING FOR ME?

I NEVER DREAMED *HE* WOULD GO AGAINST THE OATH AND THE MEASURE.

I SEE. THAT WILL BE ALL, THEN. KNIGHT HUMA, IT IS MY RECOMMENDATION TO LORD ARAK HAWKEYE THAT YOU BE ALLOWED A SECOND CHANCE

IT IS OBVIOUS THAT YOU WERE PITTED AGAINST MAGIC OF EXCEPTIONAL MAGNITUDE AND THAT YOUR LEAVING THE CAMP WITHOUT GIVING WARNING WAS DUE TO THIS.

THANK YOU, MILORD – MILORDS.

YOU TWO ARE DISMISSED.

KNIGHTS HUMA AND RENNARD, YOU ARE BOTH RELIEVED FROM DUTY FOR THE NIGHT. GET SOME REST.

THAT WENT WELL.

THANK YOU, RENNARD.

FOR WHAT? THAT? SOMEONE MUST SAVE YOU FROM YOURSELF.

BESIDES, I WOULD NOT GIVE BENNETT THE SATISFACTION. NOT EVEN FOR THE OATH.

OR THE MEASURE.

RENNARD LIVES BY A CODE OF HIS OWN, IT SEEMS...

BUT I'M TOO RELIEVED – AND TOO TIRED – TO DWELL UPON IT.

LORD HAWKEYE WAS RIGHT... SLEEP IS *DEFINITELY* IN ORDER.

STRANGE... A DREAM?

I KNOW THIS PLACE.

THE *BRONZE TOWER!*

MORGION'S DOMAIN ON THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS.

MOTHER!

MORGION!

GOD OF DISEASE AND DECAY.

MASTER OF THE BRONZE TOWER.

IT'S EARLY YET, BUT I HAVE NO DESIRE TO GO BACK TO SLEEP.

I DON'T EVER RECALL HAVING A DREAM THAT WAS SO VIVID.

SOME SAY SUCH DREAMS HOLD SIGNIFICANCE.

WHAT THAT MAY BE HERE, I DO NOT KNOW.

AAAHHH!

DREADWOLF!

IT SENSES ME.

=GROAN=

KAZ.

HUMA?

ROLL OVER. LOOK BEYOND ME.

BY MY ANCESTORS. A DREADWOLF, HUMA!

HUUMMMAA

I KNOW. I MUST GO CLOSER.

HUMA, NO!

YOU GAVE US A MERRY CHASE, KNIGHT OF SOLAMNIA. COST US A VALUABLE SERVANT, TOO. WE THINK YOU BE AS GREAT A DANGER AS YOUR TREACHEROUS FRIEND, MAGIUS.

MAGIUS?

DID THEY CAPTURE HIM?

HUMA.

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

WE KNOW WHERE HE IS NOW.

HE WILL LEARN WHAT IT IS TO BETRAY *GALAN DRACOS.*

GALAN DRACOS! LEADER OF THE RENEGADES. SERVANT OF TAKHISIS.

CRYNUS WAS VERY TAKEN WITH YOU AFTER THAT BRIEF CLASH. HE WAS VERY NEAR TO CAPTURING YOUR FRIEND WHEN YOU HAPPENED ALONG. NO SURPRISE WHEN WE REALIZED WHO YOU WERE.

YOUR GOOD FRIEND MAGIUS USED YOU AS A DECOY, YOUNG KNIGHT. DID YOU REALIZE THAT?

IT WAS THE DESIRE OF CRYNUS TO PLUCK YOU FROM THE CAMP PERSONALLY AND REMOVE YOU TO HIS CITADEL, THERE TO BATTLE WITH YOU AT HIS LEISURE.

I WAS LUCKY.

LUCK IS A SKILL. WERE YOU TO LIVE MUCH LONGER, YOU MIGHT LEARN THAT.

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR FROM ME. NO, IF ANYTHING, YOU SHOULD FEAR YOURSELF, KNIGHT OF THE CROWN. AT THE MOMENT, YOU ARE YOUR OWN WORST ENEMY.

HAHA HAHA

BWAAA

WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?

HE CAME TO MOCK ME, IT SEEMS. BUT WHY WOULD CRYNUS EVEN BOTHER WITH SOMEONE LIKE ME?

PERHAPS HE IS MORE INTERESTED IN THIS FRIEND OF YOURS. PERHAPS THIS FRIEND IS NOT SO CLOSE TO CAPTURE, AND THIS IS MERELY SOME PLOY.

WHO IS THIS MAGIUS?

... HMMM.

AN INTERESTING TALE, HUMA.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

I KNOW WHAT I MIGHT DO, BUT YOUR WAYS ARE NOT MINE, KNIGHT OF SOLAMNIA. I SUGGEST YOU TRY THE WALKING CORPSE. HE SEEMS TO BE YOUR ALLY.

YES.

PERHAPS RENNARD *COULD* SHED SOME LIGHT ON THIS.

WHAT NEWS, RENNARD?

THE EASTERN FORCES ARE IN RETREAT.

IT'S NOT POSSIBLE! THE KNIGHTHOOD HAS NEVER SUFFERED SUCH A DEFEAT!

IT HAS NOW.

DRAGONS!

GOOD DRAGONS, TOO – ONLY GOLD, COPPER, BRASS, BRONZE, AND SILVER.

THEY ARE THE CHILDREN OF PALADINE.

KAZ...

I HAVE NOT REGRETTED MY ACT, HUMA. I CHOSE TO STRIKE DOWN THE OGRE, AND I WOULD DO SO AGAIN.

BESIDES, THERE IS NO TRUE HOME FOR ME AMONG MY PEOPLE NOW.

TO THEM, I WOULD BE A COWARD AND A WEAKLING FOR SHOWING PITY TO THE HELPLESS.

THAT DRAGON... IT'S HER.

THE SILVER WHO FOUGHT AT MY SIDE AGAINST CRYNUS.

THE FORCES OF LIGHT... HOW CAN THEY STAND AGAINST SUCH DARKNESS?

IT WAS A PLOY, OUR DEFEAT OF THAT OTHER DARKNESS. I'LL WAGER THAT THE MAGES WILL FIND THEMSELVES UP AGAINST EVEN GREATER ODDS WHEN THEY ATTEMPT TO PUSH IT BACK, AND I'LL WAGER THEY LOSE.

SARGAS FORGIVE ME! IT'S THE KING OF ALL HURRICANES, BUT ON LAND!

MILORD!

WE NEED TO ACT SWIFTLY!

MEN, PREPARE FOR BATTLE!

FIND A HOLLOW AND LIE IN IT UNTIL THE STORM PASSES!

WHAT ABOUT THE CAMP?

LEAVE IT!

THIS IS NO TIME FOR TIDINESS!

MY TENT!

THERE'S NOT MUCH THEY CAN DO. THE WIND BLOWS SO HARD, THE FIRE WILL BE UNSTOPPABLE.

BY PALADINE!

EVEN THE DRAGONS CAN'T WEATHER THE STORM!

LOOK!

THE SPELLCASTERS! THEY'VE STOPPED IT!

ONLY FOR A MOMENT.

GET THE HORSES. IF WE DON'T RELEASE THEM, THEY'LL BE KILLED WHEN THE MAGIC-USERS FALL.

WE'RE PULLING BACK!

WE MUST NOT ROUT, THOUGH! IF WE DO, NOTHING STANDS BETWEEN THE DARK QUEEN'S JACKALS AND VINGAARD KEEP!

NOTHING!

THE HORSES!

IF WE DON'T SET THEM LOOSE, THEY'LL KILL THEMSELVES!

KRAK!

KAZ!

KAZ!

YOU ARE UNINJURED?

I SHOULD ASK *YOU* THAT!

CAN YOU RUN?

GIVE ME A MOMENT. I FEAR THE HORSE HAS PUSHED ALL THE AIR OUT OF MY LUNGS.

BY ALL THAT'S HOLY! NEVER HAVE I SEEN SUCH A DARKNESS.

IS THIS THE END?

WILL THE LIGHT FALL TO DARKNESS?

KRABOOM

HUMA!

HUMA! A LIGHT AHEAD!

I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU.

THE SOUNDS OF BATTLE ARE QUIETER AND QUIETER.

ALL I CAN DO AT THIS POINT IS FOLLOW MAGIUS.

OUTRUNNERS. THINGS BRED AND MISBRED BY GALAN DRACOS.

SMALL WONDER SOME BEGAN TO CALL HIM THE *QUEEN'S MORTAL CONSORT.*

HIS TWISTED IMAGINATION IS TRULY WORTHY OF HER.

WHAT DOES HE MEAN BY *SOME?*

IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE SEEN MAGIUS, AND I HAVE PLENTY OF QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LAST FEW YEARS.

HUMA.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

MAGIUS?

HMMM?

ARE WE HEADING BACK DEEPER INTO SOLAMNIA?

NO.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

WE ARE GOING TO MY CITADEL, MY DOMAIN.

YES.

ERGOTH?

HE HAS BETRAYED US!

NO, KAZ!

I HAVE NOT BETRAYED YOU, EITHER OF YOU.

TRUE, WE ARE MOVING INTO ERGOTH, BUT MUCH OF THAT LAND IS STILL ESSENTIALLY UNTOUCHED BY THE OGRES AND THEIR FOUL MISTRESS.

WE ARE, IN FACT, MORE LIKELY TO BE SAFE HERE THAN IF WE HAD FOLLOWED THE MAD RUSH BY THE OH-SO-STALWART KNIGHTHOOD.

MAGIUS ALWAYS MOCKED THE KNIGHTHOOD AND ITS WAYS WHEN WE WERE YOUNGER, SO I SUPPOSE IT SHOULDN'T SURPRISE ME NOW.

OF COURSE, HE FAILS TO MENTION THAT THE WIZARDS FLED AS WELL.

BY SARGAS AND MY ANCESTORS FOR TWENTY GENERATIONS--

IF ANYONE DRAWS ATTENTION TO US, IT WILL BE *YOU*, MINOTAUR!

CALL ON YOUR DUSTY KIN IF YOU MUST, BUT DO NOT CALL UPON THAT DARK GOD UNLESS YOU DESIRE HIS PERSONAL ATTENTION NOW!

NOW, MAY WE CONTINUE? I WILL TIRE EVENTUALLY, AND I HAVE NO DESIRE TO BE WITHIN THE RANGE OF THE DARK QUEEN'S SENTINELS.

PALADINE, HELP US.

I FEEL GUILTY - I SHOULD BE HELPING THE KNIGHTS REGROUP THE FORCES, NOT WANDERING IN THIS NEVERENDING SHADOW.

NO. I MUST REMEMBER THAT CRYNUS IS LOOKING FOR ME.

I'LL BE MORE LIKELY TO DO SOME GOOD HERE, WHERE THE WARLORD WOULD LEAST SUSPECT MY PRESENCE.

THE POWER LEVEL USED TO CREATE AND MAINTAIN THIS MONSTROSITY MUST BE MONUMENTAL.

THE RENEGADES OF GALAN DRACOS ARE TALENTED, BUT EVEN THEY HAVE THEIR LIMITS. YET IT APPEARS TO HAVE SERVED ITS PURPOSE. THE STALEMATE IS BROKEN.

MAGIUS, WHAT HAPPENED IN THE EAST?

SOMETHING HAPPENED IN THE EAST?

THE DRAGONS CAME. THEY SAID THAT THE EAST HAD COLLAPSED.

INDEED?

YOU KNOW A LOT, MAGIC-USER. MUCH MORE THAN YOU ARE TELLING US.

I WILL DO MY BEST TO ENLIGHTEN YOU WHEN WE HAVE REACHED OUR DESTINATION.

AND HOW LONG WILL THAT BE? I COULD SWEAR WE HAVE BEEN WALKING FOR DAYS.

PATIENCE! THIS MAY BE THE MOST DANGEROUS PART OF THE JOURNEY.

MORE DAMNED RIDDLES!

WE SHOULD BE FAIRLY SAFE NOW. I CHOSE THE SHORTEST, SAFEST ROUTE POSSIBLE UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT WE STILL HAVE A DAY'S JOURNEY AHEAD OF US.

I WILL NOT HAVE DRACOS OR EVEN THE BLACK ROBES KNOW THE WHEREABOUTS OF MY GROVE.

I AM STARVED.

=SIGH=

TAP TAP

HOW POWERFUL IS MAGIUS, I WONDER?

AND TO WHOM DOES HE DEDICATE HIS POWER?

IT IS NOT MUCH, BUT WE WILL HAVE TO MAKE DO UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES.

HE DOESN'T WEAR THE RED ROBES OF THE ORDER OF NEUTRALITY. HIS CLOTHES ARE THAT OF A NOBLE.

GOD OF THE SEA! I HAVE NEVER SAVORED A WINE SUCH AS THIS!

MY COMPLIMENTS ON YOUR TASTE. IT IS A RARE TREAT GIVEN TO ME BY THE QUALINESTI ELVES. I FIND IT HAS BECOME MY PERSONAL FAVORITE.

YOU'VE BEEN AMONG THE QUALINESTI?

I'VE BEEN AMONG THEM. I WENT TO FEEL THEM OUT. THEY REMAIN AS STUBBORN AS THEIR KIN, THE SILVANESTI.

EACH THINKS THAT THEY CAN SAVE THE WORLD SINGLE-HANDEDLY. THEIR PRIDE IS AT THE EXPENSE OF MANKIND.

AS FOR US...

I GROW WEARY. I THINK, PERHAPS, IT'S TIME WE SET CAMP FOR THE NIGHT.

CAMP?

IN THIS DARKNESS?

LOOK AROUND YOU.

THE DARKNESS - GONE. AS IF IT WERE A BAD DREAM.

I THINK WE SHOULD SET UP A WATCH.

JUST IN CASE.

HUMA, *PLEASE.*

I ASSURE YOU MY POWERS ARE MORE THAN SUFFICIENT FOR SUCH A TASK.

=SNORT=

I'D RATHER KEEP GOING THAN TRUST MY LIFE TO *THIS* FOOL.

THERE *WILL* BE A WATCH, MAGIUS.

WE'LL TAKE TURNS.

FINE, FINE...

BUT I GO *LAST.*

KNIGHTS WHO SLEEP HEAVILY DON'T LIVE VERY LONG.

SOMETHING IS NEARBY, AND I DON'T THINK MAGIUS...

...HAS SEEN IT.

BECAUSE HE'S ASLEEP. RIGHT.

I SUPPOSE I SHOULDN'T BE SURPRISED.

I'LL JUST PRETEND LIKE I'M ROLLING OVER IN MY SLEEP...

HAND FALLS OVER MY SWORD, AND...

WHAT THE...?!

THE LEGEND CONTINUES IN ISSUE #5 AS THE HEROES TRAVEL TO...

THE CITADEL OF MAGIUS!

HAHAHAHAHAHAHA

CEASE YOUR POSTURING, BRAVE WARRIORS.

THE ELEMENTAL HAS NO INTENTION OF DOING BATTLE WITH YOU.

HE IS MINE – A GATEKEEPER, YOU MIGHT SAY.

WHUMP

HEH.

YOU WILL NEVER STAND ON TWO LEGS UNLESS I SAY SO, MY HOT-HEADED FRIEND.

HAVE I YOUR WORD THAT YOU WILL CEASE YOUR ATTEMPTS TO DO AWAY WITH ME?

RRWWWWBLL

>GRUNT<

OH, DO GET UP!

YOU'RE PERFECTLY SAFE.

SPEAK TO ME.

ALL WELL. NO ONE ENTERS GROVE. CITADEL WELCOMES MAGE'S RETURN.

BEYOND THAT DENSE CLUMP OF TREES, PERHAPS THREE TO FOUR HOURS' JOURNEY, IS OUR DESTINATION.

THAT CLOSE, AND YOU MADE US SLEEP HERE?

I BELIEVE YOU HEARD THE EARTH ELEMENTAL MENTION THE GROVE, DID YOU NOT?

WHAT OF IT?

ONLY *I* WOULD DARE ENTER THE GROVE DURING DARKNESS, AND THAT IS BECAUSE I HAVE SPENT TIME MASTERING IT.

TO HAVE LED YOU TWO THROUGH IT WOULD HAVE SURELY MEANT YOUR DOOM.

WHAT IS THE DANGER? CAN A BLADE OR AX PUT AN END TO IT?

HA!

THERE ARE FAR MORE DEADLIER THREATS THAN MERE PHYSICAL ONES. LET US SAY, IT WOULD TAKE A STRONG MIND TO COME OUT OF THERE IN ONE PIECE.

A STRONG MIND OR A SIMPLE ONE, TAKE YOUR PICK.

MORE RIDDLES.

MAGIUS IS SO DIFFERENT NOW, EVER SINCE THE TEST.

THE ELEMENTAL WILL GUIDE US AND DO WHAT IT CAN TO PROTECT ANY OF US WHO MIGHT FALL OFF THE PATH.

MAY THE GODS HAVE MERCY ON HE WHO DOES...

...BECAUSE THE GROVE WILL NOT.

LOOK AT THIS.

WHY, THE PATH WE JUST PASSED WAS CLEAR AND WELL WORN! SURELY, THIS IS THE WRONG PATH!

THE MOST ATTRACTIVE LURE CATCHES THE MOST FLIES, MY FRIEND. YOU ARE WELCOME TO TRY THE OTHER PATH, IF YOU LIKE.

HERE, WE FACE A LITTLE PRICK FROM A PLANT.

THERE... IT COULD BE ANYTHING.

I BELIEVE HIM, KAZ.

THEN I WILL GO WHERE YOU GO.

I'M GLAD THAT'S SETTLED.

TAP TAP

THIS PATH IS PAINFUL!

I'LL HAVE TO LOWER MY VISOR TO KEEP MY FACE FROM GETTING CUT.

KAZ ISN'T SO LUCKY. HE HAS NO ARMOR TO PROTECT HIM.

AT LEAST HE DOES NOT COMPLAIN.

MINOTAURS DO NOT SHOW WEAKNESS. IN THEIR MINDS, MIGHT MAKES RIGHT.

OOF

SARGAS!

AAAH!

OUCH!

WHY DO I KEEP HITTING MY HEAD?

THANK PALADINE I HAVE SUCH A THICK SKULL!

MAGIUS!

KAZ!

HUUMAAA.

MY SWORD! I MUST HAVE DROPPED IT.

I STILL HAVE MY DAGGER. IT'S MY ONLY CHANCE.

HYAAH!

HUH?

MAGIUS' MINION?!

I COULD ALMOST HUG HIM!

FOLLOW.

THIS...THING TELLS ME TO FOLLOW IT, YET IT ISN'T MOVING.

IS IT FROZEN IN PLACE?

THE CREATURE APPEARS TO BE STUCK. NO WONDER, AS BIG AS IT IS.

PERHAPS I SHOULD TRY TO DIG IT OUT.

YEEOUCH!

HOT!

FOLLOW.

NO ARGUMENTS FROM ME.

EVERY TIME THE ELEMENTAL MOVES, HIS "FACE" MOVES TO A DIFFERENT PART OF ITS BODY. IT'S RATHER DISCONCERTING.

I THINK THAT'S THE PATH UP AHEAD.

HUMA!

WHEN YOU FELL OFF THE PATH, YOUR BOVINE COMPANION WAS ALL FOR RUSHING AFTER YOU.

IT WAS ALL I COULD DO TO EXPLAIN TO HIM THAT HAVING TWO OF YOU LOST OUT THERE WOULD BE QUITE FOOLISH.

YOU WOULDN'T GO AFTER HIM! SOMEONE HAD TO!

SOMEONE DID.

WHILE I CAN MAKE MY WAY THROUGH THE GROVE, I WOULD MUCH PREFER TO SEND THE ELEMENTAL, WHO HAS NOTHING TO FEAR, THAN RISK MYSELF PURELY FOR THE SAKE OF APPEARANCES.

YOU ARE A COWARD!

I'M PRACTICAL.

IF THE ELEMENTAL HAD NOT BEEN HERE OR HAD FAILED TO FIND YOU, I WOULD HAVE FOLLOWED YOU, THAT I PROMISE.

SNORT

I SWEAR THOSE TWO WILL END UP KILLING EACH OTHER SOMEDAY.

THAT LIGHT. IT'S SO...

BY MY ANCESTORS...

MAGIUS' CITADEL IS MAGNIFICENT. HE MUST BE POWERFUL INDEED TO HAVE ACCOMPLISHED ALL THIS!

WELCOME TO MY HOME.

THE CITADEL SEEMS TO GROW LARGER THE CLOSER WE COME TO IT!

HOW CAN THE DRAGONS NOT SEE SOMETHING OF SUCH SCALE?

LIKE THIS FIELD...

THINGS ARE NOT ALWAYS WHAT THEY APPEAR TO BE - OR ARE SEEN TO BE.

SOMEONE CREATED THIS PLACE LONG BEFORE MEN EVER SET FOOT ON KRYNN. I HAVE SPENT MUCH TIME TRYING TO DISCOVER THEIR SECRETS, BUT THE FRAGMENTS HINT AT THE HANDIWORK OF OGRES. I CANNOT BELIEVE THAT OGRES COULD EVER BUILD A PLACE OF SUCH BEAUTY.

PERHAPS, THIS WAS MADE AS A GARDEN PARADISE FOR THE GODS THEMSELVES. I THINK THAT WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE.

=COUGH= =COUGH=

FORGIVE ME. YOU MUST BE TIRED AND THIRSTY.

WE SHALL GO INSIDE AND BE REFRESHED. AFTER THAT, WE SHALL SPEAK.

AMAZING!

I FEEL LIKE I KNOW THIS PLACE FROM SOMEWHERE, ALTHOUGH I HAVE NEVER VENTURED THERE BEFORE.

NOT ALL OF IT IS ORIGINAL, BUT ONE CANNOT HAVE EVERYTHING.

BE CAREFUL!

THIS SCULPTURE WAS MADE BY ONE OF MY PEOPLE.

IMPOSSIBLE. IT MUST BE ELVEN. LOOK AT IT.

=SNORT= DO YOU THINK WE HAVE NO ARTISANS?

I RECOGNIZE THE TELL-TALE PATTERNS IN THE CLAY, EVEN IF YOUR "WELL-VERSED" MIND CANNOT MAKE ANYTHING OUT OF THEM.

WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO MOLD A DRAGON LIKE THAT? I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE SO LONG AND NARROW.

DID SUCH EXIST?

I HAVE NEVER UNCOVERED EVIDENCE OF SUCH A BEAST.

IT IS MY BELIEF THAT THIS IS PURELY AN ARTISTIC REPRESENTATION, THE PRODUCT OF SOMEONE'S IMAGINATION.

ANOTHER REASON WHY IT CANNOT BE THE WORK OF MINOTAURS, NOT TO MENTION THE FACT THAT IT IS FAR TOO OLD.

WE WERE THE FIRST CIVILIZED RACE.

CIVILIZED OR DOMESTICATED?

MAKE YOUR NEXT THROW A GOOD ONE, *COW*, BECAUSE IT WILL BE YOUR LAST.

AND NEXT TIME, USE SOMETHING A LITTLE LESS VALUABLE.

STOP IT!

ANSALON, PERHAPS ALL OF KRYNN, MAY BE LYING HELPLESS BENEATH TAKHISIS, AND YOU TWO ARE ACTING LIKE *SCHOOLCHILDREN!*

THERE'S MUCH MORE TO SEE, BUT I IMAGINE YOU TWO MIGHT WISH TO GET SOME REST. AM I CORRECT?

ON *THAT* POINT, AT LEAST.

MAGIUS SEEMS SO DIFFERENT THAN WHEN WE GREW UP TOGETHER. I SHOULD BE ABLE TO TRUST HIM, BUT I KNOW HE'S HOLDING BACK SECRETS.

...THEN AGAIN, MAYBE IT'S ME WHO HAS CHANGED. IN THE OLD DAYS, I WOULD HAVE NEVER QUESTIONED MAGIUS OR PROBED HIM FOR ANSWERS.

THE KNIGHTHOOD HAS OPENED MY EYES TO THE VEILED HALF-TRUTHS THAT PLAY SO LARGE A PART IN MOST PEOPLE'S LIVES.

I SHOULD LIKE TO HEAR YOUR PLAN.

IN GOOD TIME.

TAP TAP

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THAT? CAN YOU CONTACT YOUR ORDER?

WE CANNOT STAY HERE FOREVER. YOU CAME LOOKING FOR US. DON'T YOU HAVE A PLAN?

OF COURSE.

THERE ARE FAR TOO MANY MATTERS HERE THAT I MUST ATTEND TO IMMEDIATELY. WHILE I DO SO, YOU TWO MAY RELAX AND PERHAPS ENJOY SOME FOOD.

GUESTS. GUIDE.

GUESTS GUIDE

ROOMS FOR THE NIGHT.

ROOMS

AIR ELEMENTALS ARE SO SLOW.

NOW, IF YOU PLEASE.

WHEN YOU ARE FED AND RESTED, THINGS WILL BE CLEARER.

HMMMPH.

THIS MAGE IS YOUR FRIEND?

YES.

PRAY THAT HE STILL CONSIDERS YOU IN THE SAME WAY.

I THINK THAT THIS TOWER AND ITS SECRETS WOULD MAKE FOR A VERY SECURE, VERY *PERMANENT* PRISON.

HRM...

ALTHOUGH I'M BEGINNING TO WONDER HOW SURE I AM OF THAT.

THE ROOMS HAVE EVERYTHING WE COULD EVER WANT. THEY'RE LARGE ENOUGH THAT EVEN KAZ FEELS COMFORTABLE.

THAT SERVES AS FURTHER PROOF TO KAZ THAT MINOTAURS BUILT THIS PLACE, OF COURSE, ALTHOUGH THEY'VE NEVER BEEN RECORDED BEING THIS FAR WEST.

I DON'T LIKE HOW YOUR...*FRIEND* HAS DIVIDED US INTO TWO ROOMS. IT'S AN OBVIOUS PLOY TO DIVIDE AND CONQUER US.

HAD HE DESIRED TO, MAGIUS COULD HAVE STRUCK US BOTH DOWN ANY ONE OF A HUNDRED TIMES.

YOU SAW THE WAY HE HANDLED YOU IN THE CORRIDOR.

LUCK. LET ME TAKE HIM ON, ONE ON ONE.

AND HE WILL LEAVE NOTHING BUT ASHES.

MAGIC IS AS MUCH A PART OF HIM AS BREATHING IS TO US.

IN MY HOMELAND--

THIS IS ERGOTH.

THESE ARE HUMAN LANDS. HUMAN WAYS.

KRAK

ARE THEY? HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THE BATTLE ALREADY?

I HAVE NOT. I ONLY THINK THAT YOU SHOULD TRUST ME. I KNOW MAGIUS FAR BETTER THAN YOU.

I HOPE YOU DO.

FOR BOTH OUR SAKES.

HMM.

KAZ'S SNORES RESONATE NICELY THROUGH THE WALLS.

BUT IT'S HIS WORDS THAT ARE KEEPING ME AWAKE.

AM I LETTING CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF MAGIUS CLOUD MY JUDGMENT?

HE'S MY FRIEND. I KNOW HIM, AND KNOW HIS HEART.

DON'T I?

HUMA.

HUMA, I MUST SPEAK WITH YOU.

MAGIUS?

WHO ELSE?

FORGIVE ME THE DRAMATIC ENTRANCE, BUT I WISH TO AVOID SPEAKING WITH THE MINOTAUR, WHO MIGHT BE DISPLEASED WITH SOME OF WHAT I'M ABOUT TO SAY.

AND I WON'T BE?

YOU MIGHT BE. BUT AT LEAST YOU ALSO SEE REASON. MY POWERS NEED ONLY SLIP ONCE FOR THAT TWO-LEGGED BULL TO DO ME IN.

I COULD NOT ENTIRELY FAULT HIM, MAGIUS.

I KNOW.

HOW DEARLY I KNOW.

TELL ME, AND I WILL PROMISE TO LISTEN WITH AN OPEN MIND.

YOU SEE BEFORE YOU A WIZARD OF GREAT POWER – AND EVEN GREATER POTENTIAL.

I WAS NOT THE FIRST TO SAY THAT. FAT, CHEERFUL BELGARDIN SAID THAT THE DAY HE SPONSORED ME.

BELGARDIN – AH, I REMEMBER HIM.

HE WAS THE FIRST TO SEE THE POTENTIAL IN MAGIUS – THAT INSIDE HIM WAS A POWER SUCH AS HE HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE.

I EXCELLED AT ALL THINGS. I WAS THE BRIGHTEST CANDIDATE THEY HAD EVER SEEN. I MASTERED SPELLS EVEN SOME ESTABLISHED ADEPTS HAD DIFFICULTY WITH.

I WAS A PRODIGY.

YOU ORDINARY PEOPLE HEAR OF THE TEST OF HIGH SORCERY AND ALL THE RUMORS ABOUT WHAT GOES ON.

THE RUMORS PALE IN COMPARISON TO THE TRUTH.

I CANNOT SAY WHAT OTHERS HAVE GONE THROUGH, JUST THAT SOME DID NOT SURVIVE.

I WENT INTO THE TEST WITH EVERY POSSIBLE SCENARIO PLOTTED OUT IN MY MIND. I THOUGHT THAT THEY WOULD SEND DARK ELVES AFTER ME, FORCE ME TO KILL AN ELDERLY OR ILL PERSON. PERHAPS, I BELIEVED, THEY WOULD HAVE ME STAND AT THE EDGE OF THE ABYSS AND FACE THE QUEEN OF DARKNESS HERSELF.

I KNEW THAT SOME OF IT WOULD BE ILLUSION, BUT MUCH OF IT WOULD BE VERY REAL. REAL ENOUGH TO KILL ME.

HEH HEH.

THEY FOOLED ME COMPLETELY. OR, PERHAPS, EVEN THEY DO NOT TRULY KNOW ALL THAT GOES ON DURING THE TEST. I SUSPECT THAT SOMETIMES THE POWER ITSELF TAKES A HAND.

WHATEVER THE CASE, I WAS CONFRONTED WITH THE ONE THING I FOUND I COULD NOT ACCEPT.

MY DEATH.

OR, I SHOULD SAY, MY DEATH IN THE FUTURE.

SOMEHOW, I SUCCEEDED IN SURVIVING. I THINK THAT MADNESS WAS WHAT WAITED FOR ME IF I FAILED. I FOOLED THEM BY ENTERING INTO ANOTHER TYPE OF MADNESS THEN.

A MADNESS CREATED BY THE REALIZATION THAT WHAT I SAW WOULD INDEED COME TO PASS. I LEFT THE TOWER, LEFT THE TEST, KNOWING MY FATE AND DETERMINED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

AND I FOUND I COULD NOT. NOT BY THE STRICT BYLAWS OF THE ORDERS. DESPITE THEIR SUPPOSED FREEDOM FROM RESTRICTIONS, NEITHER THE RED NOR THE BLACK ROBES OFFERED ANYTHING THAT COULD ASSIST ME.

THEY WERE STILL TOO LIMITED, AND I CERTAINLY WAS NOT CUT OUT TO WEAR THE ROBES OF WHITE, AS YOU WELL KNOW.

=HEH=

=HEH=

WITH A REALIZATION OF THE RESTRICTIONS PLACED UPON ME BY THE THREE ORDERS, I DECIDED THAT I WOULD BE FORCED TO STEP BEYOND THE LINES THEY HAD DRAWN IN ORDER TO – IF YOU'LL PARDON ME FOR SAYING SO – CHANGE THE FUTURE.

THIS EXPLAINS EVERYTHING.

THE WILD SPELLS. THE OUTLANDISH CLOTHING, SO DIFFERENT FROM THE AUSTERE ROBES OF OTHER MAGES.

BUT WHAT HE'S SAYING...IT'S NOT POSSIBLE!

THEN AND THERE, I TURNED FROM THE FORMALIZED, STIFLING TRAINING OF THE CONCLAVE...

...AND BECAME A ***RENEGADE.***

A RENEGADE!

DOES IT SHOCK YOU SO, HUMA? I WAS YOUNG, UNBRIDLED. I PROBABLY WOULD HAVE LEFT FOR OTHER REASONS. DISGUST FOR THE TEST, PERHAPS, WHICH I STILL FIND A BARBARIC WAY OF TRIMMING THE DEAD LEAVES.

WE KNIGHTS DISTRUST MAGIC AS IT IS, BUT A RENEGADE IS DARKER THAN THE BLACKEST OF THE BLACK ROBES!

A RENEGADE IS ONLY WHAT HE MAKES OF HIMSELF, HUMA. THERE ARE VERY FEW, SINCE IT IS HARD TO ESCAPE THE NOTICE OF THE CONCLAVE, BUT SOME OF THOSE FEW ARE VERY GOOD PEOPLE.

NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH, SOMETIMES. HAD THEY TAKEN THE TEST, MOST OF THEM WOULD HAVE PERISHED.

WHILE THEY LIVE, THEY DO WHAT LITTLE THEY CAN TO HELP OTHERS. OF COURSE, THERE IS ALWAYS THE OTHER SIDE.

GALAN DRACOS.

YES. EVEN THE DARK QUEEN'S CLERICS FEAR HIM. SHE NEEDS HIM, THOUGH.

YOU KNOW A LOT.

I - I HEARD MUCH OF HIM AS I TRAVELED. I THOUGHT HE MIGHT BE THE ONE TO AID ME, TO GIVE ME PROTECTION. HE HAS NO FEAR OF THE THREE ORDERS.

CRASH

UH-OH.

THAT SOUNDED LIKE IT CAME FROM KAZ'S ROOM.

I HEARD HIM! WHERE IS HE?

WHOOM

I DO NOT THINK WE CAN CONTINUE OUR DISCUSSION FOR NOW. TRY TO UNDERSTAND THAT EVERYTHING I'VE DONE IS FOR GOOD REASONS.

WE'LL TALK LATER.

WHAT IS IT, KAZ?
THIS IS A TRAP, AS I SUSPECTED!
MY AX IS GONE! MY DAGGERS ARE MISSING!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
AS IT TURNED OUT, MY SWORD AND DAGGERS WERE MISSING TOO.
WHAT HAS HE DONE TO YOU? ARE YOU ILL?
I'M FINE. IT'S NOTHING.
I'VE BEEN A *FOOL!*
WE'RE LEAVING - SOMEHOW.

I DON'T LIKE THIS.
WHAT THE...?
WHAT NOW?
WE'RE TRAPPED IN SOME SORT OF LOOP.

NOTHING. WE WON'T BE GOING ANYWHERE, IT SEEMS.
WE CANNOT STAY HERE!
HAVE YOU ANY IDEAS? THERE ARE NO WINDOWS, AND THE WALLS ARE SOLID -- AT LEAST FOR US.
WE COULD CLIMB DOWN TO THE CORRIDOR.
WE WAIT.
WE HAVE NO CHOICE.

WAAAKKEE

MASSTER WISSHES SPEAK HUMMA ONLY

I WILL GO WITH HIM WHETHER YOUR MASTER LIKES IT OR NOT!

NOW LEAD ON, OR I'LL INHALE YOU!

NO!

THAT'S ODD - I WALKED DOWN THE STAIRS NORMALLY THIS TIME, BUT KAZ MUST STILL BE CAUGHT IN THE ENCHANTMENT.

IT SEEMS MAGIUS WILL SPEAK WITH ME, AND *ONLY* WITH ME.

WAIT FOR ME HERE, KAZ. I WILL RETURN SHORTLY.

SHKAK!

HUMA.

MAGIUS, WHAT - ?

I KNOW. I LEAVE YOU WITH MORE QUESTIONS AND FEARS EACH TIME WE MEET.

I'M AFRAID I CAN'T CHANGE THAT EVEN NOW, ALTHOUGH I WILL ATTEMPT TO CLEAR UP A FEW DIFFICULTIES. FIRST, I WANT YOU TO SEE THIS.

GALAN DRACOS KNOWS WHERE I AM AND PROBABLY KNOWS THAT YOU ARE HERE AS WELL!

A DREADWOLF.

THERE WERE THREE MORE, BUT THEY PERISHED IN THE GROVE. SOMEHOW, BATTERED AND TORN AS IT WAS, THIS ONE MADE IT TO THE FIELD, WHERE THE EARTH ELEMENTAL FINISHED IT.

THE LEGEND CONTINUES IN ISSUE #6 AS HUMA ENCOUNTERS... THE BLACK GUARD!

LOOK INTO THE ***MIRROR***, HUMA

I DON'T BLAME MAGIUS FOR BEING SPOOKED. GALAN DRACOS KNOWS WHERE MAGIUS' CITADEL IS.

TAP TAP

SHOW ME.

THERE. THE PEAK IN THE CENTER.

WHEN I WAS TESTED IN THE TOWER, I ***SAW*** THAT--THE MOUNTAIN. I REMEMBER IT WELL, FOR IT WAS THE FINAL SITE CONJURED.

I DID NOT KNOW IT WAS ***REAL*** UNTIL I FOUND ***THIS*** PLACE, AND THE TAPESTRY IN THE HALL. WHEN I SAW IT, I KNEW THERE WAS MORE TRUTH TO THE SCENES IN MY TEST THAN EVEN MY INSTRUCTORS KNEW.

THIS MOUNTAIN ***MEANS*** SOMETHING TO THE WAR. IT ***CONCEALS*** SOMETHING. IT IS THE ONE PUZZLE I CANNOT FATHOM. I DON'T EVEN KNOW ITS EXACT ***LOCATION***, BUT IT IS WEST OF HERE - SOUTHWEST, POSSIBLY.

THE MINOTAUR ALSO HAS HIS WEAPONS BACK. THE ELEMENTAL WILL LEAD YOU TO THE UNDERGROUND PASSAGES AND TO HORSES THAT I HAVE KEPT FOR EMERGENCIES.

RRRRUUMMBLE

WHAT--?

SHOW ME!

MOONS OF KRYNN!

AM I ***WORTHY*** OF THE ATTENTION OF CRYNUS HIMSELF?

CRYNUS!

OH, YES, YOU TWO HAVE *MET*. HAD I THE TIME, I WOULD TELL YOU MUCH CONCERNING HIM AND THE *BLACK GUARDSMEN*. AS IT IS...

WOOOSSSHHRR

ARION! TAKE THEM TO THE STABLES! HURRY!

MAGIUS, LET ME *HELP*.

HELP ME?

I ONCE STOOD AT THE *SIDE* OF *GALAN DRACOS*. I WAS SECOND ONLY TO HIM AMONG HIS GATHERING OF MAGES. IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN *DRAGONS* TO STOP ME.

GO NOW.

HUMA!

KAZ!

WHAT MADNESS HAS HE BROUGHT ON US *NOW*?

ONLY THE WARLORD, SIX DRAGONS, AND PALADINE KNOWS WHAT ELSE.

RRRRRRRRRUHMMMBLE

BY MY ANCESTORS, I WILL NOT DIE CRUSHED UNDER ROCK!

FOOOLSSS! FOOLLOOWW!

THAT THING...

...IS OUR *GUIDE* OUT OF HERE! NO MORE WORDS!

BLAST MAGILUS AND HIS *SECRETS*!

HIS WORDS ARE HARD TO SWALLOW. HE STOOD AT THE SIDE OF GALAN DRACOS? HE'S ALREADY SAID THAT HE WAS A *RENEGADE*.

NO! MAGILUS IS MY *FRIEND*. THAT COUNTS FOR SOMETHING. I'VE *GOT* TO BELIEVE IN HIM.

WHERE *ARE* WE?

WEST OF THE GROVE, I THINK. THE HALL TUNNELED *UNDERNEATH* IT.

GOOD. *ONE* SMALL DIFFICULTY OUT OF THE WAY.

RRRUUMMMMBLE

GOT TO FREE THE HORSES. THE CAVE'S ABOUT TO COME DOWN, AND I'LL NOT HAVE THEM DIE!

YAAAH!

WHY MUST MAGIUS STAY BEHIND? WHAT *USE* IS THERE IN FIGHTING A BATTLE THAT CAN'T BE *WON*?

THEN AGAIN, THE NEXT BATTLE...

...WILL BE *MINE*!

RIDERS!

THE *BLACK GUARD*!

I COUNT EIGHT OF THEM. THIS IS *NOT* GOOD.

DREADWOLVES!

SIX OR SEVEN OF THEM. I CAN'T GET A GOOD COUNT. THIS IS DEFINITELY NOT GOOD.

WHAT THE...? THEIR LEADER IS *STOPPING*--

CRUNCH

PALADINE BE PRAISED!

I *KNEW* I COULD COUNT ON MAGIUS.

IF THE BLACK GUARD DOESN'T GET US, THESE BRANCHES WILL!

WE CAN'T--

WHAP!

WE *CAN'T* KEEP ON LIKE THIS. THE HORSES WILL *PERISH.*

AGREED!

WE'RE PUSHING THESE POOR ANIMALS AT A KILLING PACE. THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY.

SPLIT UP! RIDE TO THE NORTH!

I HATE LEAVING KAZ LIKE THAT, BUT WE NEED TO *DIVIDE* THEIR FORCES. I'LL HAVE TO CATCH UP WITH HIM LATER.

I MIGHT HAVE A CHANCE IF THE ***DREADWOLVES*** FOLLOW THE HORSE.

I HATE EVEN THINKING THE THOUGHT. TO HAVE TO SACRIFICE ***ANY*** ANIMAL FOR MY OWN SURVIVAL...

I MUST ***STALL*** THEM LONG ENOUGH FOR KAZ TO FLEE. ***ONE*** OF US WILL SURVIVE, EVEN IF THE OTHER MUST MAKE A SACRIFICE.

PALADINE, DO NOT LET MY SACRIFICE BE IN VAIN!

DO I DARE TAKE A PEEK?

AAAAAH!

HERE THEY COME!

FOR PALADINE!

NOW'S MY ***CHANCE.***

I'VE GOT TO GAIN CONTROL OF THIS HORSE, AND FAST!

WHOA, GIRL!

GLURK

WHY WON'T THIS THING *DIE?*

HYAAH!

THE HORSE IS NEAR ITS LIMIT!

TIME TO FINISH THIS.

BY PALADINE, I'M GOING TO *DIE.*

I'LL *NOT* GO ALONE!

THE REST OF THE BATTLE IS A *BLUR.*

I CAN'T GIVE UP.

I CAN'T STOP. IF I STOP, I *DIE.*

BLOOD... EVERYWHERE!

IT'S HARD TO SEE.

I'VE GOT TO...

...KEEP ON FIGHTING...

BY THE GODS!

DID I DO ALL OF THIS?

I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN WALKING FOR HOURS.

I DON'T FEEL NUMB ANYMORE. ALL I FEEL IS ***PAIN.***

THE WATER IS SOOTHING. I FEEL BETTER, BOTH IN BODY AND IN MIND.

I GUESS MY BEST BET WOULD BE TO FOLLOW THIS STREAM TO THE SOUTHWEST, AS MAGIUS HAS SUGGESTED.

I ***ABANDONED*** KAZ. MY ONE TRUE FRIEND, AND I ABANDONED HIM.

IS HE SAFE SOMEWHERE? EVEN ***KAZ*** CAN'T FEND OFF THE ENTIRE BLACK GUARD!

LOOK AT ME, I'M A ***MESS.***

BENNETT WOULD NEVER BE SEEN LIKE THIS. ***HIS*** ARMOR ALWAYS SHINES; ***HIS*** MUSTACHE IS ALWAYS ***GROOMED.***

BENNETT IS A ***TRUE*** KNIGHT.

SOMEONE ***BEHIND*** ME!

YIPE!

BRIGAND!

UH-OH.

THESE AREN'T THE HUMAN FORCES OF TAKHISIS, *THAT'S* FOR SURE.

BUT ARE THEY ALLIES...

...OR *ENEMIES?*

STAY YOUR WEAPONS! THAT IS AN ORDER!

A KNIGHT OF SOLAMNIA?

A LITTLE FAR FROM VINGAARD KEEP, ARE YOU NOT, KNIGHT OF THE CROWN?

I HAVE BEEN ON MY OWN FOR DAYS. I HAVE FOUGHT OFF MONSTERS AND WARRIORS. MY PATH HAS NOT BEEN ENTIRELY BY CHOICE.

I SEE.

I'M SURE I DON'T OFFER A VERY IMPRESSIVE PICTURE OF THE KNIGHTHOOD.

I AM A KNIGHT OF SOLAMNIA, THOUGH, AND NO MATTER HOW I LOOK, I WILL ACT WITH DIGNITY.

I AM HUMA, KNIGHT OF SOLAMNIA, DEFENDER OF THE ORDER OF THE CROWN.

I WAS FORCED IN THIS DIRECTION BY THE BLACK GUARD WHEN THE DARK QUEEN'S MINIONS CRUSHED OUR LINES.

I AM LORD GUY AVONDALE OUT OF DURENDI.

WHO ARE YOU, AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE MIDDLE OF ERGOTH? HAVE THE SOLAMNICS BROKEN THROUGH AT LAST?

DO I UNDERSTAND YOU CORRECTLY? THE KNIGHTHOOD... HAS BEEN CRUSHED?

NO, LORD AVONDALE. OUR LINES WERE CRUSHED, BUT WE WERE TO ***REGROUP*** FURTHER BACK.

I, UNFORTUNATELY, WAS PRESSED IN THE WRONG DIRECTION. VINGAARD KEEP STILL STANDS-- AS IT ALWAYS HAS AND ALWAYS ***WILL***.

WE IN ERGOTH ARE ONLY ***TOO*** FAMILIAR WITH THE STRENGTH OF THE KNIGHTHOOD, ALTHOUGH IT SEEMS TO HAVE AVAILED US LITTLE.

GLAD I AM TO HEAR THAT THE KNIGHTS HAVE NOT BEEN TOTALLY VANQUISHED, THOUGH.

THERE IS ***MUCH*** I WISH TO ASK OF YOU, BUT YOU APPEAR TO BE NEAR COLLAPSE.

YOU-- GIVE HIM YOUR HORSE FOR NOW.

THIS IS NO ***TRAP***, HUMA. WE ARE AS MUCH THE FOES OF THE DARK QUEEN AS YOU ARE. LET PAST DIFFERENCES REMAIN WHERE THEY ARE-- IN THE ***PAST***.

I WISH ONLY THE SAME, LORD AVONDALE.

FINE. WHEN WE GET BACK TO CAMP, I'LL SEE THAT YOU ARE FED. THEN YOU CAN EITHER REST OR COME STRAIGHT TO ME.

MILORD, HAVE THERE BEEN ANY RUMORS OF A LONE *MINOTAUR* WANDERING THIS REGION?

A MINOTAUR...?

IT SEEMS NOT. IF THERE *IS* ONE, WE SHALL *DEAL* WITH IT, NEVER FEAR.

MILORD, THAT IS WHAT I DO *NOT* WANT!

I REALIZE THIS WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT...

THE MINOTAUR...

...IS AN *ALLY*, AND MUST NOT BE *HARMED*.

HIS NAME IS *KAZ*.

INDEED.

I HAVE NEVER *HEARD* OF SUCH A THING-- AND *NEVER* THOUGHT I WOULD HEAR IT FROM A KNIGHT OF SOLAMNIA.

BUT I WILL DO AS YOU *REQUEST*. IS THAT SUFFICIENT?

YES, MILORD.

RETURN THIS COLUMN TO SOME SEMBLANCE OF ORDER.

HAVE *THAT ONE* LOCKED UP WHEN WE RETURN.

THE MAN YOU WERE CHASING WAS A DESERTER. YOU HAVE MY GRATITUDE. I LOOK FORWARD TO OUR TALK.

I...I FEEL...

GODS!

DEREK, HELP KEEP HIM UP! WE DO NOT WANT HIM TO FALL BENEATH THE HOOVES OF HIS HORSE.

...SICK...

GODS!

HE'S COVERED WITH WOUNDS!

I MUST HAVE SLEPT FOR A DAY. I'M SURE LORD AVONDALE WAS WORRIED. OVERWHELMING FATIGUE IS ONE OF THE FIRST SIGNS OF THE ***PLAGUE***.

NOW THAT LORD AVONDALE IS CONVINCED I AM WELL, HE HAS REQUESTED MY PRESENCE FOR A ***PRIVATE*** CONVERSATION.

I FIND IT HARD TO RECONCILE, BUT I KNOW YOU SPEAK THE ***TRUTH***, HUMA. AS OF NOW, I DO NOT SEE ***HOW*** I CAN RETURN YOU TO YOUR COMRADES.

WE ARE RIDING TO DALTIGOTH, ON ORDERS OF THE EMPEROR, AND THEN WILL MOST LIKELY TURN BACK UP NORTH.

IS THERE ANY WAY I MIGHT BE GRANTED ***FREE TRAVEL*** IN YOUR COUNTRY?

WE ARE IN THE MIDST OF ***WAR***, HUMA. HOW COULD I ***PERMIT*** YOU TO TRAVEL FREELY?

IT HAS BEEN RUMORED THAT SOMEWHERE TO THE SOUTHWEST, THERE IS A ***KEY*** TO ENDING THIS ETERNAL WAR. SOMEWHERE IN A RANGE OF ***MOUNTAINS***.

THERE ***IS*** A RANGE OF MOUNTAINS IN THAT GENERAL DIRECTION. FEW EVER ***TRAVEL*** THERE.

IT IS SAID TO BE A ***HAVEN*** FOR THE DRAGONS OF DARKNESS, AND PERHAPS ***OTHER*** THINGS AS WELL.

CAN YOU ***ACCOMPANY*** ME?

HA!

I'M AFRAID THE EMPEROR WOULD HAVE MY HEAD FOR ***THAT***. PATROLS HAVE GONE TO THOSE MOUNTAINS AND ***VANISHED***. ***MAGES*** REFUSE TO GO THERE, AND ***CLERICS*** WARN EVERYONE AWAY. DOES THAT GIVE YOU ANY IDEA OF WHAT YOU ARE ***ASKING***?

YES, MILORD.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YES. A MOMENT, PLEASE.

PERHAPS WE HAD BETTER CONTINUE OUR TALK ***TOMORROW***.

THAT WOULD BE BETTER, MILORD.

SO I ***SEE***.

COME WITH ME TO *CAERGOTH*, AND I WILL SEE TO IT THAT YOU ARE ABLE TO GO TO THE MOUNTAINS ON YOUR OWN, IF YOU STILL DESIRE TO.

CAERGOTH?

THIS HEAT...LEAVING ME BLURRY-EYED. I CAN BARELY FOCUS ON HIM!

YES, CAERGOTH. THE CLERICS WILL STEER US FROM THE *PLAGUE* AREAS. WHAT DO YOU SAY?

THANK YOU. IF YOU WOULD EXCUSE ME?

BY ALL MEANS.

THE ERGOTHIANS ARE AWESTRUCK BY MY PRESENCE. MOST HAD NEVER SEEN A KNIGHT OF SOLAMNIA BEFORE.

WITH THE TALES OF MY EXPLOITS GOING AROUND CAMP, IT SEEMS THAT I HAVE BECOME SOME SORT OF...

...LEGEND.

AFTER SOME REST, I HAVE A VISITOR.

THE *STORIES* ARE GETTING OUT OF HAND.

SUCH IS THE TRUE TRIAL OF EVERY GREAT LEGEND.

THEY *NEED* THEIR HEROES. IT GIVES THEM HOPE--HOPE THAT *SOMEHOW*, THE DARKNESS THAT IS TAKHISIS WILL BE *DEFEATED* AND THEY WILL BE ABLE TO RETURN TO THEIR LOVED ONES.

HE'S RIGHT, OF COURSE. PEOPLE *DO* NEED HOPE. HOPE AND FAITH.

BUT I'M NO *HERO*, NOR AM I A LEGEND.

WE'RE SOON ON THE ROAD TO CAERGOTH. MY MIND RACES BACK TO KAZ.

I WONDER IF HE HEADED NORTH, OR IF HE TURNED BACK SOUTH SEEKING ***ME.*** IF THE LATTER IS THE CASE, THEN A MINOTAUR WOULD NOT BE WELCOME IN ANY TOWN IN THIS AREA.

KAZ WOULD MAKE SURE THAT HE DIDN'T DIE ***ALONE.***

OCCASIONALLY, A DRAGON WOULD STOP BY AND GIVE US NEWS OF THE WAR. NORTHERN ERGOTH AND HYLO HAD BEEN OVERRUN.

WHAT NEWS OF SOLAMNIA?

I KNOW NOT OF WHAT HAS OCCURRED IN SOLAMNIA, SIR KNIGHT.

ONLY THAT THERE ARE RUMORS THAT THE KNIGHTS HAVE BEEN PUSHED BACK NEARLY HALF THE DISTANCE TO VINGAARD KEEP.

AVONDALE CALLS A HALT FOR US TO MAKE CAMP FOR THE NIGHT.

WE'RE ABOUT TWO DAYS FROM CAERGOTH.

AVONDALE TELLS ME THAT THIS TOWN WAS ONCE ***PROSPEROUS.***

IT PERISHED FROM PLAGUE IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE WAR. SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THE NEWEST WAVE OF THE PLAGUE ***ORIGINATES*** FROM HERE.

LORD AVONDALE...

...IS OF A *DIFFERENT* MIND.

YOU WILL RECALL THAT I MENTIONED HOW... *PARTICULAR* I BELIEVED THE PLAGUE WAS.

I REMEMBER.

I BELIEVE IT IS SO PARTICULAR...

...BECAUSE IT IS *PURPOSEFULLY* BEING DIRECTED BY *HUMAN* AGENTS.

COULD YOU BE *MISTAKEN?*

PERHAPS...

AVONDALE NO LONGER HAS ME CONFINED TO THE CAMP ITSELF.

HE HAD APPLIED THAT RESTRICTION THE FIRST DAY, BUT HAS RELAXED IT ONCE HE REALIZED I WOULDN'T DO SOMETHING FOOLISH, LIKE RIDING OFF WITHOUT *ASSISTANCE*.

THE RUINS ARE DISTURBING. *ANYTHING* DEALING WITH THE PLAGUES DISTURBS ME.

ESPECIALLY AFTER MOTHER...

HUH? WHAT'S *THAT?*

SOME SORT OF WOLF, OR PERHAPS A DOG.

OR *MAYBE...*

I DON'T WANT TO FINISH THAT THOUGHT. IF IT'S WHAT I THINK IT IS...

HOW FAR INTO THE RUINS HAVE I *GONE?* AND WHERE'S...?

WHAT'S *THAT?*

WHAT THE..?

YEOW!

IT MELTS INTO THE *NIGHT!*

KRAK

EMPTY!

MY QUARRY HAS VANISHED.

=COUGH=
=COUGH=
=COUGH=

I FEEL SICK. I CAN BARELY STAND.

I...COULD USE...A NAP...

HHSSSSSSS

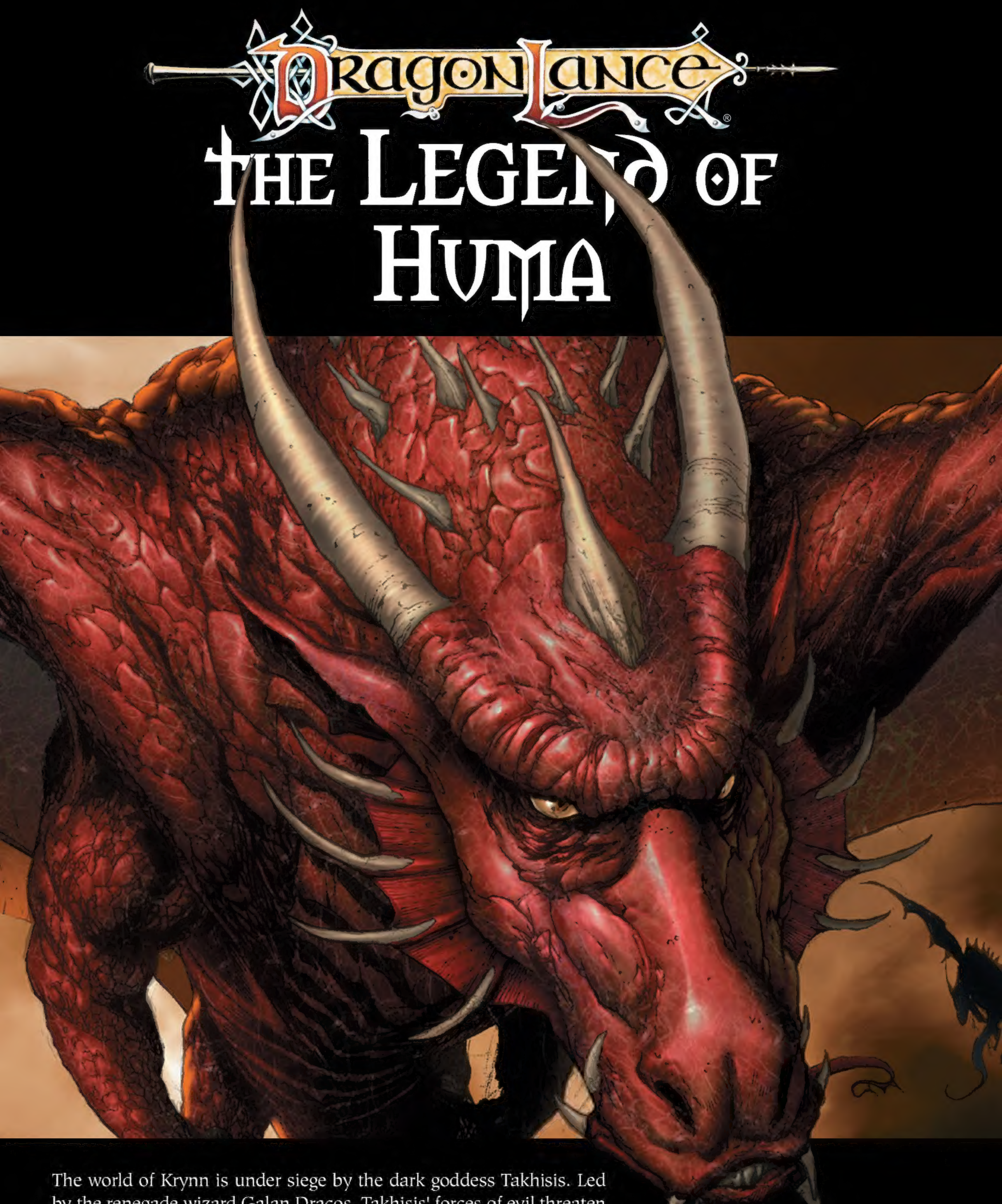
SNAP!

AWROOOOOOOOO

THE LEGEND CONTINUES IN THE PAGES OF THE LEGEND OF HUMA, BY RICHARD A. KNAAK.

DragonLance®

The Legend of Huma



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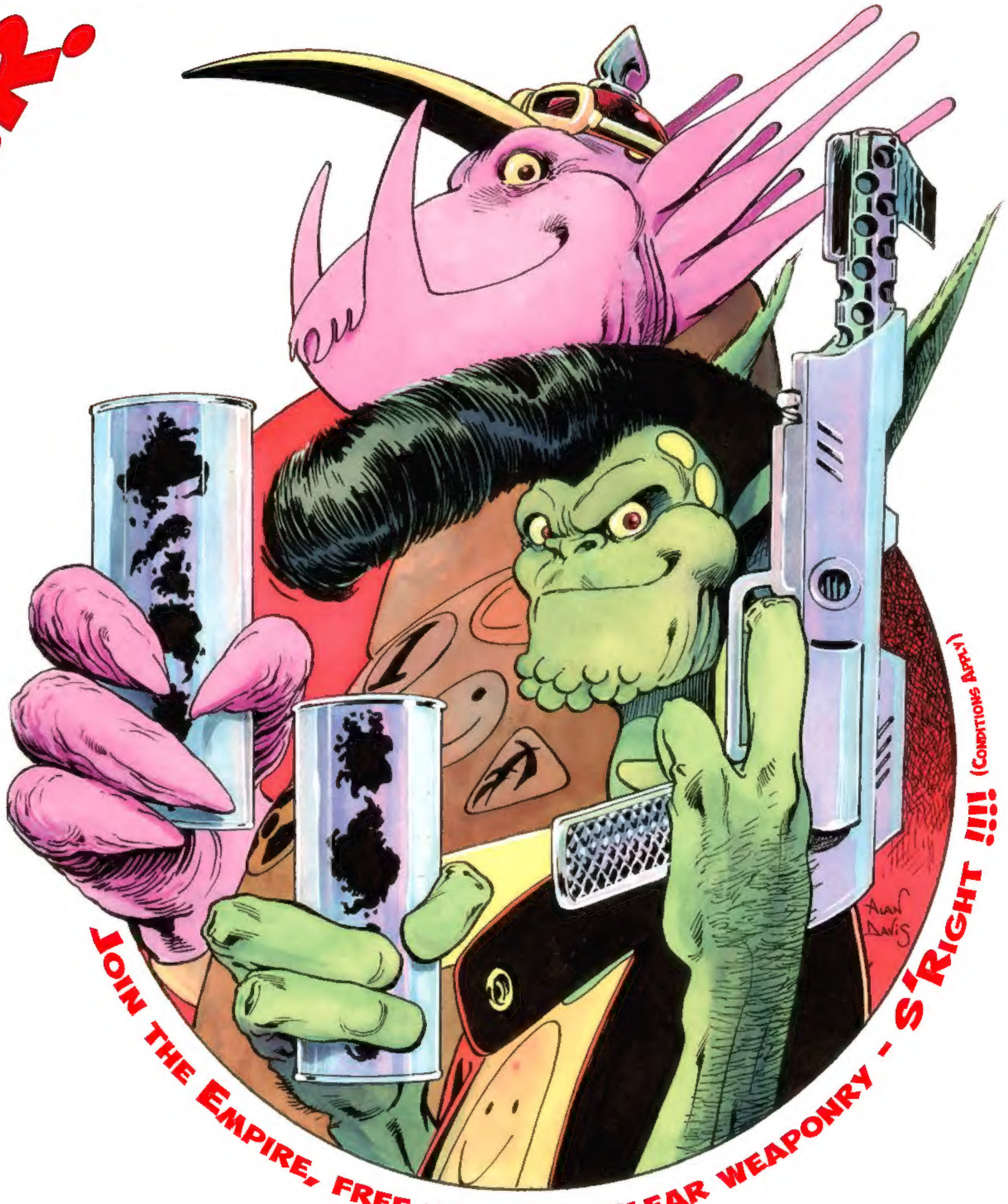

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